

The old street features a great variety of structures that retain the unique southern Sichuan style.

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The final resting place of the great Khan has been one of archaeology's enduring mysteries for centuries.

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Zhang Xiade painted Yongdingmen 40 years ago, and thus made an invaluable contribution to the restoration of the magnificent gate tower.

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Dusting off Dunhuang

By Chu Meng

Usually a quite oasis populated by backpackers, art lovers and researchers studying the ancient frescoes and statues of the Mogao Grottoes, Dunhuang was subject to a flurry of media attention last week.

The focus was on the unveiling of 243 previously undocumented caves and the presentation of digital simulation conservation technologies, as well as the achievements of an international collaboration to preserve Dunhuang's priceless cultural heritage.

Dunhuang is an oasis on the eastern edge of the Taklimakan Desert in northwest China's Gansu Province. In the 2nd century BC, Emperor Wudi of the Han Dynasty sent an envoy to the "western regions" opening up a trade route that is now known as the Silk Road.

It quickly became an important cultural, economic and religious center, through which Chinese culture and products, especially silk, were introduced to Europe and the Middle East, and foreign goods and culture came to central China. Perhaps the most significant of these imports was the introduction of Buddhism from India.

Re-evaluation of the north area

The Mogao Grottoes are located along a cliff face on the east slope of Mingsha (Ring-sand) Hill, 25 kilometers from Dunhuang. Until recently, there were 492 documented caves in the cliff, which are generally divided into the south area and the north area. The south area is 1,000 meters long and contains 487 of the 492 caves. It is in this area that the Buddhist wall paintings, statues and sutra scriptures that the grottoes are famous for were found.

The five caves in the 700-meter cliff of the north area were the only ones in that area to yield valuable relics. Consequently, for the past half century, the mistaken belief has persisted that most religious activities such as the teaching of sutras and religious ceremonies were concentrated in the south area, while the unadorned caves in the north area were only for the accommodation of painters and workers.

"This assumption is completely wrong," Peng Jinzhang, a renowned archaeologist from the Dunhuang Academy and husband of the academy's general director Fan Jinshi, told *Beijing Today* last Friday, "In fact, these caves were actually where the monks who traveled here in ancient times studied, lived and were buried. After nearly 16 years of research, I have just completed the first dissertation to detail the function and characteristics of the north area, which will soon be published."

Peng's dissertation describes 248 caves in the north area, including the five previously studied. This brings the total number to 735, somewhat closer to the 1,000 records from the Tang period refer to. Burial caves were also discovered for the first time, which have never been found in the south area.

"Look at that cave on the first level," Peng said, pointing to a small, dark opening just above the ground. The front part, once the surface of the cliff, had collapsed as a result of an earthquake and bad weather. "See those white bones? They are the remains of monks. This was a new kind of religious burial method called "re-burial." There were three main methods by which the Buddhist monks disposed of human remains: cremation, group burial and exposing the body to carrion feeders. But re-burial was different from all of these. First the body was exposed to carrion feeders, and then the bones were retrieved and buried in the cave in which the monk had lived."

Peng also discovered many valuable relics, such as a Persian coin, 28 Western Xia coins, Western Xia - Han dic-



Tang Dynasty colored statue of a Bodhisattva in cave 45.

Photos by Sun Zhijiang

Buddhist monks started painting the first murals at Dunhuang's Mogao Grottoes in 366 AD, during the Three Kingdoms Period. The Thousand Buddha Caves, as they were commonly known, reached their peak of glory during the Tang Dynasty. The grottoes remained an important center for Buddhism for 1,000 years, up until the Yuan Dynasty.



Fan Zaixuan and Steven Richerby discuss conservation procedure in cave 85.

tionaries and scriptures in various languages. All these provide substantial evidence of Dunhuang's history as a business center and communication channel linking Europe and China's interior. "The north area is an indispensable part of Mogao Grottoes associated with the south area," Peng concluded.

Caves opened in south area

Within the 492 extant caves of the south area are preserved more than 2,000 colored statues and 45,000 square meters of wall paintings. "If we joined every painting together, they would form a gallery corridor 25 kilometers long," Yang Xiuqing, an associate researcher at Dunhuang Academy told *Beijing Today* last Friday.

"The main subjects are Buddhist portraits, historical events and legends, stories and interpretations of Buddhist scriptures, portraits of devotees and various decorative patterns. Among the wall paintings, different ethnic groups are portrayed, and different types of

lifestyles and activities, such as noble's outings, singing, dancing and music, farming, fishing and hunting, weddings, the initiation of Buddhist monks, as well as foreign envoys and merchants on the Silk Road," said Yang.

Twelve "special" caves, including the No. 45, 57, 96, 158, 159 and 285 were introduced to the world for the first time on Sunday, though only senior academics were actually allowed inside. Cave 57 is notable for its wall painting called *Bodhisattva and Devotees*. The early Tang dynasty work is painted in a meticulous style. The female Bodhisattva figure is about one meter tall, with a plump face and kindly expression. Painted with fluent and delicate lines, the artist achieves a fleshy and substantial feeling. The figure of the Bodhisattva features refined decorations, and her crown, tassels and arm band are painted with gold powder.

Three statues from the Tang Dynasty in the Special Cave 45 exquisitely portray the grave expression of Ananda (the brother of Sakyamuni), the gracefulness of the Bodhisattva and the great strength of the Heavenly King. All details of the colored statue of the Bodhisattva illustrate the delicate technique of the artist, such as her graceful posture and relaxed and calm expression.

Li Yunhe, another associate researcher at the Dunhuang Academy told *Beijing Today* Saturday "those special caves have been catalogued and studied, but they are not suitable for tourists to visit. There are three reasons: first, most of those cave are only two to three square meters. In such a small space, the murals and statues are too easily damaged; second, most of these relics are in a poor state of repair and in need of restoration work; finally, most tourists are not well informed enough to appreciate those wall paint-

ings and statues. The common caves are sufficient."

Conservation an urgent task

The dry climate and strategic geographic locations which helped to produce the unique cultural heritage of the Mogao Grottoes is also causing the gradual deterioration of those treasures.

Since the early 1950s, various repair and consolidation work has been carried out. The wooden structures of the Tang and Song dynasties were repaired; cliffs in immediate danger of collapse have been consolidated; and work has been done to halt the deterioration of the wall paintings and statues. In 1984, the small research group responsible for the grottoes was enlarged and renamed as the Dunhuang Academy, and the academy's Conservation Institute was founded. This was the earliest professional institution for conservation and research of grotto relics in China.

Since the Mogao Grottoes were entered on the World Cultural and Heritage Relics List in 1987, conservation work has made significant achievements especially in the fields of research on mechanism and restoration of wall paintings and halting deterioration, pigment analysis and anti-discoloration mechanisms, creating protective coatings for wooden structures, consolidation of the weathered cliffs, as well as the creation of a computerized storage and digital simulation system for the Mogao Grottoes.

Fan Jinshi, director of the Dunhuang Academy, told *Beijing Today* in an exclusive interview in front of the landmark building called the Nine-story Daxiong Hall Sunday, "The project jointly conducted by our academy and the American Getty Conservation Institute to repair wall paintings in cave 85 is the most delightful thing I have done as the general director here. An integrated digital system which simulates the environment and sights in 22 caves has just been finished, and it is now being tested. This system is used both for research by experts and for tourists. I dare to say it represents the most advanced technology in grotto relic conservation all over the world. The Getty Institute also brought a series of automatic weather supervision instruments, which allowed my computer to monitor the temperature, humidity, carbon dioxide level and so on of the micro environment just above the wall paintings."

Cave 85 is a large, late Tang cave containing valuable wall paintings. It is subject to all the typical problems of deterioration suffered by the relics in the Mogao Grottoes. In the process of cooperatively developing the "principle for the conservation of heritage sites in China", cave 85 has become an international experimental site for testifying grotto relic conservation.

Steven Richerby, a senior technician specializing in wall painting conservation from the Getty Institute told *Beijing Today*, "during the main period of deterioration, disruption and salination are known as the cancer of wall painting. The experiment we are doing at the latest stage is called "injection." Like a doctor, we inject carefully selected chemicals into disrupted and salinated paintings. These will suck out crystallized salt in the supporting layer between wall paintings and cliffs, and reattach them back again."

"But sometimes we have to decide whether to work on them or just to leave them alone, because in many instances, that is the better option for vulnerable relics," he added.

On Monday morning, a large quantity of conservation equipment had been placed on the ground in front of the north area, marking the launch of a conservation project concentrating on this newly explored area. It is estimated that the two-year project will cost at least 60 million yuan.

Four Olympic Venues to Be Relocated

By Chu Meng

The location of four sporting venues for the 2008 Olympics will be revised, it was revealed yesterday at the 29th IOC Coordination Commission meeting.

There were no details at press time regarding which venues would be moved, or the revised location.

Sources at the three-day meeting, which began in Beijing Wednesday, said the discussion covered preparations for the Olympics, including the venues currently under construction and those on which construction is soon to start.

All venues are guaranteed to be finished before 2007, BOCOG President Liu Qi said yesterday.

Liu also said that Beijing would fully learn the lessons from the 2004 Athens Olympics, and pay serious consideration to the overall plan of venues construction.

Central Bank Raises Interest Rates

By Sun Yongjian

The People's Bank of China, China's central bank announced yesterday that it was raising the benchmark interest rate of RMB deposits and widening the floating range of RMB loan interest rates.

The announcement, issued on the bank's website, said that the benchmark deposit interest rate for one year will be raised 0.27 percent, from the current 1.98 percent to 2.25 percent.

The benchmark loan interest rate will also be raised 0.27 percent, from 5.31 percent to 5.58 percent.

The ceiling on loan interest rates for financial institutions (excluding credit cooperatives) will be abolished, but the minimum range remains unchanged at 0.9 of the benchmark interest rate. The ceiling of 2.3 times the benchmark interest rate will remain for credit cooperatives.

An article explaining the change on the website said that raising the RMB benchmark interest rate will be effective in relieving some enterprises' demand for liquid capital and optimizing their economic structure, improving economic efficiency, and maintaining the rapid, sustainable and healthy development of the national economy.

The cancellation of the ceiling on the variable loan interest rate will give financial institutions more flexibility in deciding the level of interest rates in line with the loan risk, and provide more powerful support for the development of small and medium-sized enterprises, relieving employment pressure.

Bubonic Plague Kills Eight in Qinghai

By Chu Meng

Eight farmers have died from an outbreak of bubonic plague in northwestern China's Qinghai Province over the past three weeks, however a spokesman from the Ministry of Health confirmed yesterday the disease had been brought under control.

A circular released Wednesday by the Qinghai Health Department said that nineteen cases had been reported in four counties and 11 people had recovered. "Most of the patients were farmers, and apart from one case which needs further investigation, all were infected after hunting or eating marmots," the circular said.

The Ministry of Health sent staff to Qinghai on October 9 to help bring the disease under control. Local authorities provided funding for drugs and ordered the stepping-up of surveillance work and the isolation of infected areas.

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Insurance Funds Granted Access to Domestic Stock Market

By Sun Yongjian

The long standing ban on insurance firms investing funds directly on the domestic stock market has been lifted.

The move, publicized in a notice Sunday by the China Insurance Regulatory Commission (CIRC) frees up around 60 billion yuan held by insurance firms for transactions of RMB A-shares, trade of convertible bonds and some other investment products regulated by the CIRC.

In the past, in order to guarantee investors' interests, insurance firms were only allowed to invest funds in certain low-risk products such as

bank deposits, public bonds, financial bonds, securities investment funds, corporation bonds and some other limited investment channels.

The new regulation limits investment in stocks to 5 percent of an insurance company's overall assets. The total assets of domestic insurance firms as of the end of August was around 1.1 trillion yuan, according to the CIRC's statistics.

Criteria for investment will differed according to specific conditions, the regulation says. The CIRC will adjust the insurers' proportion of investment in line with the size of the stock market, level of risk and

the insurers' investment conditions.

Insurance companies taking advantage of the new regulation are required to implement risk-reduction systems in order to guarantee the soundness of the investment, including investment evaluation and supervision by an independent third party.

A benchmark for investment is also required, meaning that only listed companies with outstanding performance records, good liquidity and stable financial conditions can qualify for investment by insurance companies.

Seven types of high risk stocks have been specifically excluded from

investment, such as stocks suffering serious deficit or expected to suffer serious deficit and stocks under suspicion of being manipulated.

"The issuing of the new regulation means a great benefit for the domestic capital market, because it injects fresh blood into a somewhat anemic stock market," an employee of ChangAn Insurance Brokerage told *Beijing Today* Wednesday on condition of anonymity, "But as for the insurance industry, it calls for cautious observation because the operation of insurance capital should be implemented in line with the principle of stability and safety."

Draft Laws Improve Protection of Rights

By Annie Wei

Members of the Standing Committee of the 10th National People's Congress (NPC) have been working on a draft law on penalties for social security, enterprise bankruptcy and property ownership related crimes from October 22 to 24.

The social security related penalties are aimed not only at better protecting individuals' rights, but also at ensuring the proper implementation of police authority.

Tian Qiyu, vice-minister of Public Security was quoted in *Beijing Youth Daily* Monday as saying that China's first ever penalties for social security crimes have reached the stage of legislation.

The property ownership draft guarantees protection of private assets. Wang Liming, one of the main drafters of the law, told *Beijing News* Sunday that the law is an important component of the civil law. Meanwhile the draft law on company bankruptcy puts employees rights as the first consideration.

The draft law on penalties defines a broader range of activities as violating public security and provides different levels of detention and fines, according to the severity of the crime.

Included in the draft are provisions for detention of up to five days and fines of 50 to 200 yuan for football hooliganism, such as setting off fireworks inside a stadium; displaying offensive banners; attacking the referee, players or other spectators and throwing objects onto the playing field. Also, any person who is detained for football hooliganism will be banned from the stadium for 12 months.

According to the draft on property ownership, property owners have the right to change their management agent; the property management unit cannot appropriate roads or space where doing so will be counter to the benefits of the owners; no resident may affect the neighboring apartment's lighting or ventilation, or adversely affect the neighbors by making noise or dumping rubbish.

Representative committees that attended the discussion say the draft provides an important means to regulate property and assets, and to maintain economic development and social order.

As to employee rights, the draft law on company bankruptcy stipulates that when a company is declared bankrupt, employees' payment and basic social welfare and related compensation required by law will be made the first priority.

The draft revises the original order of bankrupt companies' assets compensation to better protect employee benefits.



Shanghai Holds Anti-terrorism Exercise

Shanghai police respond to a simulated chemical weapons attack Wednesday in the city's first comprehensive anti-terrorism exercise.

Xinhua Photo

Forex Fund Flow Loosened

China's foreign exchange authorities announced a long-expected loosening measure Wednesday, allowing multinational companies to transfer forex funds among its subsidiaries.

The new regulation, promulgated by the State Administration of Foreign Exchange (SAFE), allows subsidiaries of Chinese and foreign multinationals to borrow forex funds from their peers, both within China and across the border, but stops short of permitting their overseas subsidiaries to lend to member companies operating in China. The regulation takes effect Monday.

The move "will provide a variety of solutions for multinational companies to

improve efficiency in the use of foreign exchange and reduce financing costs, will help improve China's foreign investment environment and propel Chinese-funded multinational companies to implement their 'Go-out' strategy," the commission said in a statement.

China still maintains strict forex controls. The renminbi, is only partly convertible under the capital account. Companies, even those owned by the same parent group, were previously not allowed to borrow forex funds from one another.

Yet many foreign-invested companies operating in China have accumulated sizable profits and excess funds

from the local market, and have been calling for integrated use of their forex funds, SAFE said.

Many Chinese multinational firms are experiencing funding shortages in overseas markets, which hampers their efforts to grow internationally, the commission said.

SAFE said multinationals in the regulation refer to group companies that own subsidiaries both in and outside China, and has a China-based member company responsible for managing the group's investments globally or for a region that includes China. Financial institutions are excluded, it said.

(China Daily)

Late Tax Payers Face Public Disclosure

By Annie Wei

From next year, companies and individuals whose taxes are overdue face having their financial details published in the media.

The State Administration of Taxation (SAT) issued a notice Tuesday on its website to this effect, which will take effect from January 1, 2005.

The notice authorizes county-level and above taxation bureaus to publicize the financial situation of overdue taxpayers through the taxation office directly or by way of television, radio, newspaper and the Internet.

Details of overdue taxes owed by enterprises or companies will be published quarterly, and those of private business owners or individuals will be published every six months. Instances of tax evasion will be publicized as they are exposed.

The notice also stipulates that authorities at different levels are responsible for handling cases of overdue taxes according to the amount involved: County-level tax bureaus are responsible for enterprises or companies owing less than 2 million yuan and private business owners or individuals owing less than 100,000 yuan; City or above level tax bureaus are responsible for enterprises or companies owing more than 2 million yuan and private business owners or individuals owing more than 100,000 yuan, and provincial or municipal taxation bureaus are responsible for situations involving tax evasion.

New Traffic Regulation on Third-party Insurance

By Sun Yongjian

Local implementation of the national Road Traffic Safety Law, which came into effect on May 1, was adopted by the Beijing Municipal People's Congress on October 22, and will be enacted on January 1 next year.

A parallel regulation on compulsory third-party insurance is expected to be issued by the State Council by the end of this year, Wang Jiayan, a member of the Legal Affairs Committee of the Beijing Municipal People's Congress told *Beijing Today* last Friday.

"As a new principle of repayment for traffic accidents, third-party insurance will ensure the availability of funds for payment of damages when motor vehicles run into pedestrians or non-motor vehicles such as bicycles resulting in casualties and financial loss," Wang said.

The insurance will provide minimal compensation according to national standards if the driver is proven not to be responsible for the accident.

The new principle marks an end to the practice of the drivers of vehicles being held fully responsible for payment in the case of traffic accidents between motor vehicles and pedestrians or non-motor vehicles, a report in *Beijing Star Daily* said Saturday.

Anti-dumping Charges Against China Increase

By Dong Xin

By September 30 this year, 46 anti-dumping cases with a total amount of \$1.1 billion had been lodged against Chinese companies, an increase of 4.5 percent and 1.5 respectively on last year.

Wang Shichun, leader of the Fair Trade for Import and Export Bureau of the Ministry of Commerce, revealed the figures at a recent forum on import and export of private companies in Yiwu, Zhejiang Province.

Since China's accession to the World Trade Organization, the number of anti-dumping claims involving China from other WTO members has continued to increase. Not only are anti-dumping cases increasing in quantity, the amount being claimed in these cases is also rising. China has been subject to more anti-dumping charges than any other country for nine years in succession.

According to Wang, Turkey is the country that has had the most trade conflicts and disputes with China.

Other countries that have been prominent in launching anti-dumping cases against China include the US, India, Australia and Canada, as well as the EU.

Top 100 Private Companies Named

By Annie Wei

A list of the top 100 private companies with the biggest import and export values in 2003 was released at the China Yiwu International Commodities Fair last Saturday.

According to the Ministry of Commerce, which compiled the list, private enterprise import and export values reached \$59.3 billion in 2003, around 7 percent of the national total. These 100 top players also recorded foreign trade value of \$13 billion, about 1.5 percent of the total.

Dongguan Machinery Import and Export Company from Guangdong Province ranked top of the list, with an import and export value of over \$2 billion.

Liu Haiquan, vice-secretary of the Department of Planning and Finance was quoted in *Chinaview* last Saturday as saying that these 100 firms had three common characteristics: they are all large scale, with 37 enterprises having an import and export value over \$100 million; 45 firms are focusing on electronics applications, and others range from textiles, light industry to agriculture and food; and 83 are based in eastern China.

The list is intended to help foreign firms get to know China's private firms better, and at the same time, help local firms participate in more global business.

Four Trustee Companies Authorized for Social Security Fund Management

By Dong Xin

The names of four new companies authorized to manage social security funds were announced on the National Council for Social Security's web-site Saturday. The companies are E Fund Management, China Merchants Fund Management, Guo Tai Assets Management and China International Finance.

According to Meng Zhaoxi, director of the Social Security department of the Ministry of Labor and Social Security, the reserve fund managed by the National Council for Social Security is about 140 billion yuan, 15 percent of which can be invested in the stock market according to a policy released in April.

This means that some 20 billion yuan will be available for investment by the trustees in the stock market this year.

BOB Board Holds First Meeting

By Pan Hao

Beijing Olympic Broadcasting Co., or BOB for short, the host television and radio broadcaster for the 2008 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games, held its first board meeting on Wednesday.

During the session, Jiang Xiaoyu, vice president of the

Beijing Organizing Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad (BOCOG) was named chairman of the BOB board, and Hein Verbruggen, chairman of the IOC Coordination Commission for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad and chairman of IOC Olympic Broadcasting Services, was

named vice chairman.

BOB will provide television and radio signals to broadcasters all over the world, establish and operate the International Broadcast Center and other necessary broadcasting facilities, and offer related services to rights-holding broadcasters during the Beijing Olympic

Games.

By the time the Games begin, BOB should employ approximately 4,000 personnel and more than four billion people around the world are expected to watch or listen to Olympic competitions and related activities through BOB's television and radio coverage.



The world's largest paper making machine, a 8,000-meter long line produced by Finn Metso Corporation, was set up at Ningbo Asia Pulp & Paper Co. in Ningbo, Zhejiang Province on Wednesday. The machine is scheduled to enter operation next month. (Photo by Imaginechina)

Top Economist Backs Company Lawsuit Against Ministry

By Sun Yongjian

Two weeks after Ningbo, Zhejiang Province-based AUX Group, a leading Chinese household appliance producer, filed a lawsuit with the No. 1 Intermediate People's Court of Beijing against the Ministry of Information Industry, the case still remains unresolved.

The company filed the case on October 12, charging the ministry with failing to uphold its legal responsibilities by turning down several applications by AUX to market mobile phones produced by the company under its own brand, Li Xiaolong, AUX market supervisor told *Beijing Today* on Thursday.

Li said that the Ministry of Information Industry no longer had the power to examine and approve communication products in keeping with a decision by China's State Council of a few years ago, therefore meaning the ministry did not have the right to block AUX's applications.

"The court has accepted the case, but they haven't informed us of their final decision on whether to hear the case or not," Li said.

"We can't give you a definite answer on whether the case has been formally accepted or not," an official from the court's press department said the same day.

As a result of the ministry's decisions, mobile phones made by AUX had to carry other companies' brands to get access to the market, Li said.

Professor Wu Jinglian, a famed Chinese economist, came out in support of AUX on Wednesday.

"Conducting administrative examinations and approval without going through the National People's Congress is illegal. The numbers of items targeted for administration examination and approval have been reduced by several hundred, and wireless communication instruments are no longer among the items in the range of such supervision," Wu was quoted as saying in the *Beijing Morning Post* on Thursday.

Wu noted that AUX's predicament was a good example of a larger problem in China.

Around 130 domestic enterprises manufacture mobile phones, but only 36 have received licenses from the Ministry of Information Industry to sell phones under their own brands, according to information on AUX Group's website.

The nearly 100 other enterprises were therefore forced to invest large sums in purchasing rights to use other brands, Li said.

AUX alone has invested roughly 100 million yuan to buy branding rights, the *Beijing Morning Post* said.

GE Launches First Ad Blitz in China

By Dong Nan

Ads for General Electric (GE), the world's largest diversified technology, media and financial services company, have started turning up on billboards around Beijing since the company launched a major advertising campaign emphasizing its support of the approaching 2008 Olympic Games. It is the first time for the US-based company to run a corporate advertising campaign in China.

The series of seven ads feature GE's healthcare, aircraft engines, locomotive, water purification, lighting, energy generation and equipment services, and another covering its plastics business should hit



GE's new corporate ads are aimed at decision makers in corporations and government.

the market soon.

"Brand enhancement poses a great opportunity as well as a challenge to us as we continue to grow in China," Steve Schneider, GE vice president and chairman and CEO of GE China, said at a Wednesday press conference. "As an Olympic worldwide partner, we want to communicate the message that GE touches the Olympic Games in many ways with the spirit of 'imagination at work'."

Last year, GE launched its new slogan "imagination at work" to replace the 24-year-old "we bring good things to life" motto.

Schneider said that since GE was mostly a B2B business, their brand promotion focus would be on decision makers in corporations and government.

In Beijing on May 26, GE Chairman and CEO Jeff Immelt, Yuan Weimin, head of the State General Sports Administration, and Hein Verbruggen, president of the International Olympic Committee Coordination Commission, signed an agreement for GE to be a global Olympic cooperation partner. The deal makes GE one of the IOC's 11 global sponsors for eight years starting January 1, 2005.

Chinese, Aussie Firm Pave Way for Huge Ore Trade

By Qiu Jiaoning

China's Wuhan Iron and Steel Group signed a memorandum of understanding with International Minerals (IM) Pty Ltd. in Perth, Australia on October 9 for the single largest purchase of iron ore from Australia ever, the domestic *International Finance News* reported last Friday.

The memo paves the way for Wuhan Iron and Steel to buy five million tons of concentrated iron ore and seven million tones of iron ore pellets every year for the next 25 years.

An official contract still has to be signed to turn the deal into reality.

IM owner Clive Palmer signed the memo on behalf of his company and said, "The estimated value of the iron ore product sales from this project exceeds A\$20 billion. It will rank as Australia's single biggest iron ore export contract if successful."

The deal has already been approved by the state government of West Australia and cleared all environmental regulation hurdles, *China Steel News* reported last Friday.

West Australian State Development Minister Clive Brown praised the project as a significant investment for the state, which would bring in thousands of jobs.

"But Mr. Palmer's dream is a long way off completion. There is a world of difference between a [memorandum of understanding] and blinding contracts," an industry analyst in Perth was quoted as saying.

British Bank Gets \$75m QFII Quota

London-based Barclays Bank has won approval to invest \$75 million in China's main stock and debt markets under a program designed to attract foreign investors.

The British bank had been given the quota under a landmark qualified foreign institutional investor (QFII) scheme, the State Administration of Foreign Exchange said on its web site.

That brings to 20 the number of institutions known to have won quotas to invest up to a total of \$2.925 billion.

QFII offers foreign investors the option of riding Chinese corporate growth by buying directly into a wider swath of mainland-listed companies.

Before QFII, foreign investors had been confined to the tiny hard-currency B-share markets and barred from the main, yuan-denominated A-share markets and their over 1,300 companies.

France's Societe Generale, UBS AG, Citigroup and Nikko Asset Management, a unit of Japan's Nikko Cordial Corp, are among other foreign institutions to have won investment quotas. Seven institutions still await investment quotas to be able to trade on China's \$500 billion stock markets.

Power Corp of Canada and France's Calyon Corporate and Investment Bank, a unit of Credit Agricole, were the latest to win approval to invest, though they have yet to receive quotas. (Xinhua)

Bank Prepped to Set Up Fund Manager

By Sun Yongjian

The Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC) is gearing up to be the first of the country's "big four" state-owned banks to establish a fund management company after receiving approval from the national banking watchdog, the newspaper *China Business* said on Sunday.

The China Banking Regulatory Commission greenlighted the bank's application, but it still needed approval from China's

central bank and the China Securities Regulatory Commission, the report said.

Bank plans called for the fund manager to be set up before the start of the year with 500 million yuan in registered capital. ICBC will hold a 67 stake in the firm and other organizations the remaining shares, the newspaper said.

News officials from ICBC's headquarters in Beijing would not comment on the matter.

Country's First JV Cargo Carrier Takes Off

By Pan Hao

China's Shenzhen Airlines and Germany-based Lufthansa Cargo announced the foundation of a new joint venture cargo carrier in China last Thursday. Jade Cargo International is based in Shenzhen, home to China's fourth largest airport, and will be the first air carrier with foreign investment to operate in the domestic market.

Shenzhen Airlines and Lufthansa Cargo will be joined in operating the JV by German development finance institution DEG.

Jade Cargo International is scheduled to begin operations af-

ter Spring Festival next year. Outside of destinations in China, it will initially service other Asian countries including India, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand, and then expand to destinations beyond Asia in its second phase of development.

Shenzhen Airlines holds a 51 percent stake in the venture, Lufthansa Cargo a 25 percent share and DEG the remaining 24 percent.

Shenzhen Airlines did not disclose further details about the new company when contacted on Thursday.

Groupama Insurance Starts China Business

France-based Groupama Insurance opened its doors for business in southwest China's Sichuan Province on Tuesday. Despite the low profits and high risks of the agricultural insurance sector in China, Groupama decided to take the leap, becoming the first overseas-funded insurer to offer agricultural insurance in this country, China Central Television reported Wednesday.

After securing approval from the China Insurance Regulatory Commission, Groupama set up a branch in Chengdu, capital of Sichuan. The company will also establish a base in Chongqing Municipality.

At the opening ceremony, Groupama signed a framework

agreement to offer agricultural insurance with the Agricultural Bank of China, one of the "big four" state-owned banks.

While China's rural population numbers around one billion and agriculture accounts for 20 percent of the nation's gross domestic product, agricultural insurance is embarrassingly underdeveloped in this country. Agricultural premiums came to less than \$120 million of the \$25 billion total of insurance premiums in 2001.

Groupama has extensive experience in agricultural insurance. The group's total global assets reached \$62 billion by the end of 2001.

(Xinhua)

ACEA Opens Domestic Office

By James Liu

The European Automobile Manufacturers Association (ACEA), an organization that represents the 13 major car, truck and bus makers in the EU, opened its second overseas office in Beijing today, indicating the importance of the China market to Europe's automotive industry.

Dr. Bernd Pischetsrieder, CEO of Volkswagen AG and ACEA president, was quoted as saying in a news release that the group

would work closely with Chinese authorities to improve communication between all sides.

ACEA member companies now account for half of all automobile production in this country, he said.

Belgian Dominik Declercq, who has been working in China for more than 20 years and is the former president of Nexans Greater China, will lead the ACEA Beijing office.

The ACEA established its first overseas office in Tokyo in 1995.

Another Broker Put in Hands of Assets Manager

By Sun Yongjian

Just four days after MF Securities was put under the command of China Orient Asset Management Corp, another securities firm was taken over by a state-owned assets management company on October 22, the *Shanghai Securities News* reported Tuesday.

The China Securities Regulatory Commission turned Liaoning Province-based Liaoning Secu-

rities over to Cinda Assets Management Company after finding the big brokerage guilty of violating national securities transaction regulations, without specifying Liaoning Securities' transgressions.

In the past two months, seven securities firms including DHong Securities, Hengxin Securities, CFS Securities and MF Securities have been taken over by state-owned assets management companies.

IBM Expanding Software Development Lab

By Qiu Jiaoning

IBM marked the expansion of its China Software Development Laboratory (CSDL) with the inauguration of a new facility in Beijing as well as the launch of its Lab Based Services Organization and Z Series Center of Competency on Thursday.

Fa Issues Urgent Soap Recall

By Qiu Jiaoning

Two batches of Fa brand soaps are being taken off store shelves after the products failed random inspections by the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine, the Xinhua news agency reported last Thursday.

Producer Shanghai Henkel Cosmetic Co. has issued a general recall for two batches of soap produced on March 10 and March 18 this year.

"The human factor is the cause of this unexpected event," Song Chen from the public relations department of Shanghai Henkel told *Beijing Today* Wednesday. "Because things were not com-

pletely cleaned, some loose detergent and waterproofing substances left in containers got into the soaps, causing them to fail the checks."

Song said that most of the soaps in question had been delivered to stores in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province. "For soaps already bought by consumers, we have been trying our best to notify consumers through the media and leaflets," she added.

"We have always emphasized the top quality of our products and apologize for this mistake."

Consumers can check if Fa soaps in their possession are included in the recall by calling the free hotline 800-810-1585.

Euro Bond Issue Proves Popular and Complete Success

Beijing (AFX) – China’s 1 billion euro government bond issue has met with strong European demand, an outcome which may persuade Asian governments and companies to diversify away from dollar debt in favor of the European currency, the *Financial Times* reported, citing bankers close to the deal.

The paper said European pension funds and banks had offered more than 4 billion euros for the 10-year bond, China’s largest euro-denominated issue.

The strong demand from investors ranging from Finnish pension funds to Italian asset managers vindicated Beijing’s decision to break with tradition and raise most of the funds in euros, the paper said.

The US dollar tranche of the bond was limited to \$500 million in five-year notes, compared with previous

fund raisings of up to \$1 billion.

Citing industry experts, the paper said the response from Europe could allay fears by other Asian companies and governments, such as South Korea, over lack of demand for their debt among European institutions.

“In the past, Asian debt issuance has been dollar-centric. The success of this issue may well usher in a new era in which Asian borrowers look to more than one currency,” Patrick O’Brien, joint head of Asia debt capital markets at UBS, which arranged the euro tranche of the bond with BNP Paribas and Deutsche Bank, was quoted as saying.

Bankers said that more than 40 percent of the demand for the euro portion of the Chinese issue, which will pay a low level of interest relative to similar bonds, came from investors that had never previously bought into Asian debt.

Analyst’s Take:

There are three reasons for the strong European demand for China’s euro government bonds:

Above all, European investors are optimistic about the future of China’s economic development. Because a high but stable economic increase rate has been witnessed during recent years, their confidence in China’s government bonds is strong because they believe that the return for their current investment after several years will be satisfactory.

Meanwhile, European investors believe the prospects of China’s economic reform is promising as they have seen that China’s economic reform has made ample achievements over recent years.

But also the economic and trade relationship between China and European countries has developed to such an extent that it has exceeded that of

the United States and Japan.

On the other hand, the 1 billion euro bond issue reflects Chinese authorities’ wise consideration in dealing with economic and financial issues with European countries.

China used to issue US dollar bonds a few years ago, but China also wants to show her confidence in the European market. By means of the euro bond issue, the bilateral relationships are balanced.

The euro bond issue is also in line with China’s self interests. Such a portfolio can be very effective in diversifying and reducing the risk of foreign exchange reserve. If China’s exchange reserve were totally invested in a single exchange currency, it will encounter high risks such as a highly fluctuating exchange rate.

– **Economics professor Fang Fuqian, vice president of the Center For European Studies, Renmin University of China** (Sun Yongjian)

New EU Trade Rules Hit Chinese Textiles

Brussels, October 21 (AFX) – The European Commission on Wednesday proposed a new set of EU trade priorities aimed at targeting developing countries most in need, at the expense notably of Chinese textiles.

Outgoing EU trade commissioner Pascal Lamy said that the new EU trade preferences for 2006-2008 would create “a clearer, more transparent and more predictable” system for the European Union’s trading partners.

The new Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) would for example deprive China, which provided over 30 percent of the EU’s imported textiles in 2002, of its current right to pay only a three percent tariff, against the usual 12.

Lamy, who stands down as EU trade chief at the end of October, has sought to reassure textile-exporting developing countries that fear the end of EU textile import quotas in 2005 will open the floodgates to China.

Countries such as Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are concerned that the end of the quotas removes the relative protection for their exports to the European Union, and that they will be squeezed out by massive Chinese exports.

Under the new proposals, countries with preferential access to the EU market under a bilateral agreement will be removed from the list of GSP beneficiaries since they already have better access to the EU market.

Aid agency Oxfam said this proposal would end up being biased against some developing countries rather than being of benefit to them and described the basis on which the GSP would be applied as protectionist.

“The proposal looks at whether a developing country accounts for 15 percent of EU imports from the developing world, instead of from all EU imports,” said Jo Leadbeater, Head of Oxfam EU Advocacy office.

“The rule means that a developing country maybe graduating out of the GSP just as it begins to get its foot on the ladder,” she added.

Lamy’s new GSP proposals will have to be approved by EU governments and the European Parliament, but the Commission said it hopes the new system can enter force on July 1, 2005, as requested by the WTO.

Analyst’s Take:

According to the new GSP proposals of the EU Commission, countries that hold more

than 15 percent of EU market share in any industry will lose their GSP position. The reform will apply tighter restrictions on textiles, where a ceiling of 12.5 percent market share will be set.

The purpose is to deprive countries with a relatively strong position in the current GSP. China is the biggest beneficiary of the EU system, accounting for about 33 percent of imports to the 25-nation bloc under the scheme.

We shouldn’t consider it in isolation while mapping out a strategy to cope with the situation. With the enhancement of our export capacity, competition is getting tougher. On these grounds, the EU has been regarding China as its anti-dumping target, setting technology barriers for us, slow about giving official recognition to our position as a market economy.

Exclusion from preferential tariffs on textiles is just like an Intermezzo?,

So we should be aware of EU trade policy in its totality. Trade barriers have never been a part of the European Economic Community, but GSP is an exception for the developing world. GSP is a universal, indiscriminating, reciprocal tariff preference, under which export tariffs are less than one-third of the most-favored-nations’ average tax rate.

However, once developing countries sharpen their edge to a certain level, they will be removed from GSP list. Chinese textiles and clothes enjoy a 30 percent market share in the EU market, which means they can no longer enjoy the new GSP.

On the one hand, Chinese textile exports have increased so fast that the EU is almost unable to stave them off. On the other, the EU will give part of the textile market to new member countries on purpose.

Withdrawing from GSP, China will see a duty increase of about 3 percent on textile and clothes, which is obviously disadvantageous to our exports. Manufacturers of Chinese textiles and clothes have to cast away their illusions of depending on preferences. Trade associations should be set up to coordinate development. Moreover, we should engage in elevating brand consciousness and sharpening our edge in price and quality for the whole industry to hold its share of the market.

– **Sun Xiaoping, director of the Division for Economy, Institute of European Studies at the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations**

(Qiu Jiaoning)



A brand new 20 peso note will replace the \$20 bill in Cuba.

Xinhua Photo

Will Cuba’s Dollar Ban Backfire?

Havana, October 28, (International Herald Tribune) – Cuba’s decision this week to strip the American dollar of its legal tender status may cause more problems than it solves for the country’s already feeble economy.

President Fidel Castro of Cuba said on television Tuesday that Cuba would end circulation of the US dollar, after the United States moved to tighten sanctions against his government and stem the flow of remittances and tourist dollars to Cuba. The government has banned the dollar from use in

everyday transactions, though it will allow Cubans to convert dollars to pesos for a 10 percent fee.

Cuba has been operating an officially sanctioned dual-currency system, with the dollar and its own peso, since 1993. The US State Department estimated in August that remittances from abroad may account for as much as 3 percent of Cuba’s national income. Together, these measures could amount to a massive monetary tightening, probably the last thing Cuba needs.

Russian House Ratifies Kyoto Protocol

Moscow, October 27 (AP) – Russia’s upper house of parliament on Wednesday ratified the Kyoto Protocol and sent it to President Vladimir Putin for the final stamp of approval that would bring the global climate pact into force early next year.

Without Russia’s support, the pact – which has been rejected by the United States and Australia – cannot come into effect. It needs ratification by 55 industrialized nations accounting for at least 55 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions in 1990.

Putin pledged in May to speed up ratification in return for the European Union’s support of Russia’s bid to join the World Trade Organization, and he’s expected to sign it quickly. The 1997 pact would take effect 90 days after Russia notifies the United Nations of its ratification.

The approval by both houses of the Kremlin-controlled parliament followed years of hesitation and fierce debates among Russian officials. Russian foes of Kyoto warned that the pact would stymie the nation’s economic growth, but its supporters dismissed the claim, saying that even after a five-year

recovery, the post-Soviet industrial meltdown has left emissions some 30 percent below the baseline.

The United States alone accounted for 36 percent of carbon dioxide emissions in 1990, while Russia accounted for 17 percent.

Analyst’s Take:

The United States, a country based on coal and oil, has to spend a lot of money on new technology development and spend even more on new energy costs if it ratifies the Kyoto Protocol.

China, the second biggest greenhouse releaser in the world and a developing country, has agreed to the Kyoto Protocol, but has no responsibilities to decrease its carbon dioxide emissions. That’s why the United States thinks it’s unfair.

The European Union (EU), leading the push for environmental protection is affected more strongly by the warming climate. Holland, for example, loses land to the ocean. EU research found that most of the snow on the Alps will melt by 2050 if the climate change situation cannot be improved.

Energy is another key

factor. The EU has long been working on energy structure, adjustment and energy transfer from the perspective of energy safety and energy supply. To decrease carbon dioxide emissions, the EU has high taxation on gasoline and coal, and has spent money on science and technology.

– **Steven Zeng, a representative of UK-based AEA Technology (Beijing Office)**

The Kyoto Protocol was not set up to fix the climate change problem all at once, and countries set up the Protocol as a way that they could revise it and negotiate new emissions targets every so often. Negotiations for the second commitment period (for the years 2013 to 2017) are due to begin next year. So countries will have the opportunity to think about how they want the Protocol, or successive agreements under the UN Framework Convention, to look in the future, making 2005 an important year.

– **Christie Jorge-Tresolini, Senior International Fellow from the Pew Center, a non-profit and non-partisan and independent organization based in Arlington, USA.** (Wei Ying)

Europe to Lift Import Barriers

Brussels, October 25 (the Washington Times) – The European Union would lift trade sanctions that are damaging American exporters after President Bush last week signed a bill to revamp the corporate tax code and end an illegal export subsidy. But the 25-nation bloc warned that punitive tariffs could return if the WTO determines that portions of the tax bill continue to run afoul of international rules.

“As there remain some problems with the bill, which we have previously discussed both with the US administration and Congress, we intend to resolve these issues in the WTO,” said EU Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy.

US businesses welcomed the reprieve, and will try to reclaim lost profits and market share. The Bush administration also was pleased with the EU decision to lift the tariffs starting January 1, the day the tax bill takes effect.

The WTO in 2002 ruled that a portion of the US tax code offered illegal export subsidies to American companies, and allowed Europe to respond with sanctions up to \$4 billion a year, the biggest retaliation allowed since the WTO’s inception in 1995.

Delta Deal Could Avert Bankruptcy: Maybe

Atlanta, October 28 (AP) – Delta Air Lines’ pilots union said late Wednesday it had reached a tentative agreement on concessions that could save the struggling carrier from bankruptcy. Atlanta-based Delta had said it would have to seek bankruptcy protection if it didn’t get \$1 billion in concessions from its 7,000 pilots.

However, union spokeswoman Karen Miller would not say if the tentative agreement covered \$1 billion. The nation’s third-largest airline was expected to decide by Wednesday whether to seek protection from creditors, but that could be delayed if the airline and pilots’ union reached an agreement. Delta had offered to exchange \$680 million of its debt with new notes secured by \$1.2 billion worth of debt-free aircraft, flight simulators and flight training equipment.

Delta has lost more than \$6 billion since early 2001, during which time it has also cut 16,000 jobs. Delta plans to cut up to another 7,000 jobs in the next 18 months. Last week, the struggling airline reported a \$651 million loss in the third quarter.

Wall Street Expects Large DreamWorks Share Issue

Los Angeles, October 28 (AP) – Shares of DreamWorks Animation Inc. are scheduled to begin trading Thursday and were priced Wednesday night at \$28 per share, higher than the \$23 to \$25 per share target in the company’s prospectus. At that price, DreamWorks will raise \$812 million from the 29 million shares it will make available in its initial public offering.

The company is spinning off from its parent, DreamWorks SKG, formed 10 years ago. The company, which will trade under the ticker symbol “DWA” on the New York Stock Exchange, is generating tremendous buzz in a rather tepid stock market in part because it is the first entertainment IPO to be offered in years.

But long term, DreamWorks must prove it can deliver consistent hits other than its popular “Shrek” series. It also faces considerable competition from rival Pixar Animation Studios, The Walt Disney Co. and Twentieth Century Fox, which are making computer-animated features.

Marsh & McLennan CEO Greenberg Resigns

New York, October 25 (Reuters) – Marsh & McLennan Cos. Chairman and Chief Executive Jeffrey Greenberg resigned on Monday, 11 days after New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer accused the world’s biggest insurance broker of rigging bids.

At the time Spitzer filed his lawsuit, accusing the company of colluding with American International Group Inc. and other insurers to fix prices, he said he would not negotiate with Marsh’s management. Spitzer’s office said on Monday the attorney general would not press criminal charges against Marsh, but he might pursue criminal charges against individuals at the company, a spokesman in his office said.

Greenberg was replaced as chief executive by Michael Cherkasky, the chairman and CEO of Marsh’s risk and insurance services unit, who previously ran a private investigation company that Marsh bought in July. But Cherkasky did not take over the chairman’s title from Greenberg, and that position remains vacant.

Former Soccer Star Tested for Paternity Suit

By Annie Wei

Retired Chinese football star Gao Feng has been back in headlines nationwide this week for his involvement in a paternity suit just two weeks after his longtime girlfriend, singing star Na Ying, gave birth to a son.

Gao, plaintiff in the paternity case Wang Nawen and her three-year-old son headed to a scientific institute serving the Beijing court system on Wednesday after a local court ordered they submit to DNA tests to determine if Gao was the boy's father.

Shortly after 9 am that morning, Gao arrived at the institute's parking lot, where a swarm of reporters was waiting. After initially hiding in a nearby residential building for a few minutes, he made his way through the crowd, accompanied by friends and entered the facility.

Gao came out again after 20 minutes, got into his car and drove away without answering any questions from the press.

Wang and her son reached the



Gao Feng emerging from the testing institute

Photos by Chen Bai



Wang Nawen and her son

institute an hour later. The plaintiff made no attempt to hide, while the boy had a scarf over his face and was escorted inside the court by Wang's mother. Wang smiled as she made her way to the testing center, but asked journalists not to take pictures of her son.

The court is expected to an-

nounce the results of the paternity test early next week.

The high-profile story began late last month, when the Chaoyang District People's Court on September 22 accepted and heard a case filed by Wang accusing Gao of failing to provide child support to her son.

In her indictment, Wang said she was the boy's mother and Gao his father, adding Gao had not visited his supposed son since he was born. The angry mother demanded 670,000 yuan in compensation, but the court decided a paternity test was needed to determine if Gao should be considered responsible in the case.

Zhao Shuyan, a lawyer from the Beijing L&A Law Firm representing Gao, said her client would assume his legal responsibilities if proven to be the boy's father.

Na Ying issued a public letter last Thursday stating she would support her boyfriend in carrying out his fatherly duties if tests proved he was the father of Wang Nawen's son.



Colin Powell in a store in Xindong'an Shopping Center

Photo by Wang Xuefeng

Powell Takes Time for Unofficial Business

By Zhang Nan

Between high-level meetings and official functions, US Secretary of State Colin Powell managed to sneak in a short visit to the Xindong'an shopping center on Beijing's Wangfujing Street during his brief trip to the capital on Monday.

Local man Wang Xuefeng happened to be in one of the stores Powell checked out. Wang told *Beijing Youth Daily* that he immediately recognized the American statesman and snapped a photo of him talking with a store clerk.

"Some other people in the mall recognized Powell and he shook their hands. He arrived around 1:30 pm and spent no more than half an hour inside," Wang said.

Powell arrived in Beijing Sunday evening after travelling to Tokyo.

On Monday morning, he met with Chinese President Hu Jintao, Premier Wen Jiabao and Li Zhaoxing, Minister of Foreign Affairs. After attending a press conference on Monday afternoon, Powell departed Beijing for Seoul.

Flash Photos May Endanger Priceless Paintings

By Liu Zhaoxi

College student Zhao Yang traveled from Tianjin to Beijing last weekend with only one thing in mind – viewing an exhibition of classic French Impressionist paintings, currently being held in the capital's National Gallery of Fine Arts.

Zhao carried a digital camera borrowed from a friend and ended up taking snaps of the French masterworks from a distance of around five meters, fearing the sharp light of the camera's flash could harm the paintings.

His fears were well grounded.

Gallery official Wu Qiong told *Beijing Today* on Monday that camera flashes could erode paintings, while their quick blasts of heat could also have unwanted effects on the over century-old works.

An average of 7,000 people have visited the exhibition daily since it opened

on October 7, and not everyone has been as careful as Zhao with their cameras.

On Saturday, in defiance of a sign at the exhibit entrance stating "use of flash lights is strictly forbidden", many visitors flashed the paintings as they took shots from up close, sending security staff scurrying about trying to stop them.

Several perpetrators later told *Beijing Today* that they had simply forgotten to turn off the flashes on their cameras.

Ina Adema of the Netherlands admitted she used her flash to take pictures because "everybody else is doing it." Adema told *Beijing Today* that rules against flash photography in her country were carefully obeyed.

The Impressionist painting exhibition is a major event in the Year of French Culture in China, and will run in Beijing through November 27.

Xicheng Gives Pets Places to Do Their Business

By Annie Wei

Tiny toilets intended to serve the needs of residents' pets were installed around the Yuetan Jiedao community last Wednesday by the Xicheng Public Security Bureau.

The following morning, one of the little latrines had disappeared, presumably stolen during the night, the *Beijing Star Daily* said that day.

The bureau's pets office hoped the toilets would keep dog doo off the community's streets and grassy areas, thereby improving the environment and preventing conflicts between pet owners and other residents, the

newspaper said.

The brightly-colored toilets look like little dog houses and have removable traps installed underneath for easy cleaning.

Zuo Qingjie, director of the pet office, led officers to re-install the toilets last Friday morning, that time solidly planting them in the ground with large screws and positioning them in high-profile spots near community gates.

Plans to install 400 of the toilets around Xicheng would not be dropped following the theft, police were quoted as saying by the *Beijing Evening News* last Friday.

Lapping Kunming Lake

By Liu An

More than 400 people from 76 countries and regions took part in fourth annual race of "foreign friends" around Kunming Lake in the Summer Palace last Saturday.

Among the runners were employees of foreign embassies, companies and schools, including several seniors, a few teens and even a two-year-old baby.

This event was begun by the Beijing government as a way to welcome the 2008 Olympic Games and draw more foreign residents into the city's culture and development.

Luis Adoifo Guinez from the Argentine Embassy told *Beijing Today* he and his wife were not running



Photo by Zhang Jianzhong

fans and that they seldom attended such races in their country. "But we want to get to know more friends in Beijing," Guinez said.

Amber Burroughs, an English teacher from the middle school attached Renmin University, won the women's race, and Mizuhiki Yuji, a third-year Japanese student at Beijing Language and Culture University was the first man across the finish line.

Five Local Tourists Die in Kunming Bus Plunge

By Wang Fang

A tour bus containing 26 passengers, all senior citizens from Beijing, plunged off a bridge and into a lake outside the famous Stone Forest scenic area near Kunming, Yunnan Province last Sunday, killing five and injuring 21. The bus driver and two guides onboard were not hurt in the accident.

One survivor told *Beijing Youth Daily* that the accident occurred around noon when the bus driver swerved to avoid a girl playing on the bridge.

"When the bus got on the bridge, the driver stood up and leaned to the right to get something while holding the steering wheel in his left hand. A tour guide shouted, 'Watch out for that kid!' Before we knew it, the bus was already in the lake."

The injured were rushed to nearby Shilin Hospital and 10 tourists who had sustained serious wounds were then transferred to another hospital in Kunming.

Liu Lili of the Beijing Tourism Bureau told the *Beijing Daily Messenger* that relatives of the dead and injured arrived in Kunming on Monday and that representatives of related tourist agencies were at the scene to deal with problems arising from the accident.

Liu added that tourists who had already recovered from their injuries could choose to return to Beijing or complete their trips.

A representative of the China Insurance Company Chaoyang Branch told the *Beijing News* yesterday that the families of the dead could receive around 100,000 yuan in compensation.

Preliminary results of the Shilin traffic police's investigation indicate the driver was primarily responsible for the event and he has been put in detention, the *Beijing Daily Messenger* said.

A spokesman for the Shilin Scenic Zone Bureau said authorities were going to install more cautionary signs near the bridge and drop the speed limit within the scenic area to five kilometers per hour. The area would also be divided into service and visiting sections to try to reduce vehicle traffic, the spokesperson said.



Photo by Lou Qiyong

See You in Yunnan

By Zhou Ying

Beijing received a welcome splash of color this week when representatives of remote Nujiang Lisu autonomous prefecture in northwestern Yunnan Province came to the city to promote the area's 50th anniversary celebrations set for mid-November.

"Nujiang is a magical, charming land," gushed Li Jianglong, deputy director general of the local tourism administration said at a press conference in Beijing on Tuesday.

"Regional folk customs emphasize harmony with the natural landscape, and the area lies in the center of the 'Confluence of

Three Rivers' world natural heritage zone," Li said.

Following the conference, Nujiang locals dressed in elaborate traditional costumes gave a small dance performance.

One of the dancers said she and the other performers were all natives of Nujiang Lisu and none had received formal dance training. "Our people are born singers and dancers," she said.

Bus Explosion Injures 54 in Hunan

By Zhou Ying

One of the 54 passengers injured when an explosion ripped through a bus on Tuesday in Changsha, Hunan Province has been confirmed as responsible for the blast.

An officer from the Changsha Public Security Bureau told the *Shanghai Morning Post* that preliminary investigations into the accident firmly placed the blame for the explosion on the shoulders of 54-year-old Hunan native Yang Jinquan.

The police said that Yang had told some friends a month before that he was planning to do something earthshaking. "He had become depressed because of conflicts within his family," the officer was quoted as saying.

After the 1 pm blast, all

54 injured passengers, including Yang, were rushed to the Changsha Central Hospital. Many of the wounded were young students.

"Some pieces of glass from the bus windows flew into my newsstand," witness Mr. Zhang told the *Shanghai Morning Post* on Wednesday. Zhang said he rushed to the bus after the blast and saw several young people climbing out windows, crying and bleeding. "For a while, there were wounded people scattered over the ground, their hair and clothes seriously burned," he said.

The police did not disclose any information on how Yang perpetrated the blast or his motives. "He is being carefully watched by police. We are still investigating the case," the officer was quoted as saying.



By Liu Zhaoxi

A Legal Daily story has revealed findings of a national inspection, carried out by the National People's Congress on the implementation of a 2001 trade union law, that some foreign companies in China are still resisting the establishment of trade unions, most prominently Wal-Mart.

Wal-Mart, the largest retailer in the world, has been urged to support the establishment of a Chinese-style trade union in its China stores for more than three years. Starting in 2000, Shenzhen, Dalian and Kunming were among the first trade unionists to contact Wal-Mart. They were politely told by the company it would not set up trade unions. The reason? Wal-Mart doesn't participate in setting up trade unions anywhere else in the world, let alone China, according to a story in the Guangzhou-based *21st Century Business Herald* last year. Since then, municipal trade union bodies in other cities have tried to set up unions. But the company has politely but steadfastly resisted, the newspaper reported.

Wal-Mart today manages 39 stores in 19 cities across China, and employs in total more than 20,000, according to the official website of Wal-Mart China. None of the stores has a union, said an official of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU), who refused to be named.

According to the 2001 trade union law, any employee who earns a full-time salary in any business in China is entitled to organize or join a trade union. No individual or organization is allowed to obstruct or limit such actions.

Chinese media pundits have suggested Wal-Mart's resistance to unions is all about cost control. According to Chinese trade union law,

Wal-Mart to China: *Always* No Unions

But municipal officials demand foreign companies pay their dues



Wal-Mart in Shenzhen

Photo by Photocom

businesses with unions should pay the organization 2 percent of its employees' salaries. Through the union, an employee theoretically might even ask for a pay raise, something Wal-Mart is not famous for relishing.

The analysts conclude that Wal-Mart is not willing to break its business model in China of all places, and so bring union pressure down on it throughout the world. Actually, Wal-Mart is no longer

totally union-free. In August, a Wal-Mart store in Jonquière, Canada became the only unionized Wal-Mart in North America, according to the official website of United Food and Commercial Workers Canada, one of Canada's largest unions.

In a statement the Wal-Mart China headquarters filed to the *21st Century Business Herald* last year, the company claimed that it had been protecting the rights of its employees according

to Chinese law. Various rights of the employees are manifest in the contract they signed with the company and the employee's manual, the statement read.

Coming to China in 1996, Wal-Mart is not alone over the union issue in China. A National People's Congress inspection also found other foreign companies, including Kodak, Dell and KFC, have no or "unsound" trade unions, Xinhua reported.

Kong Xianghong, official at the

Guangdong Federation of Trade Unions: **Wal-Mart has no good reason to refuse trade unions**

Wal-Mart has been in China a long time, but it just will not set up trade unions according to the trade union law of China, using the excuse "our company has no custom of establishing trade unions in the USA." Whether or not the company can set up unions in the US should be based on American law. But investing in China and earning a whole lot of money from Chinese people, the company subsequently does not follow Chinese law, which cannot be justified. (From luckup.net) **Nelson Lichtenstein**, professor at the University of California, Santa Barbara, via e-mail: **Wal-Mart is hostile to trade unionism**

Wal-Mart is ideologically and organizationally hostile to trade unionism in the US and in China and throughout the world. It achieves a competitive advantage by paying its workers about 30 percent less than they are paid by other companies. Discount retailing depends on continuous, near-obsessive attention to wages and labor costs. And Wal-Mart is clearly at the head of this discount class, with selling and general administration costs – wages mainly – coming in at about 25 percent less than Kmart, Target, Home Depot and other contemporary big box retailers. At Wal-Mart and other low-benefit firms store, it is practically a capital offense to allow workers to earn overtime pay. Indeed, at Wal-Mart a 28-hour-work week is considered "full time"

employment. This gives the managers great flexibility, enabling them to parcel out the extra hours to fill in the schedule or reward favored employees.

Wal-Mart's competitive strategy has generated a howl of outrage from the unions, from small business and from those communities that see the company's "everyday low prices" as a threat to main street vibrancy. The recent "site-fights" in California and Chicago may well signal the start of an era in which the Wal-Mart corporation's template is subject to much greater political challenge and constraint. Our challenge is to channel this wave of politicized hostility into a union-led coalition that can begin to transform the nature of work at Wal-Mart.

An official at Nanjing Federation of Trade Unions: **Trade unions are welcomed by some foreign companies in China**

Wal-Mart might have perceived Chinese trade unions within the framework of what it knows about Western unions. Actually, the starting point of Chinese trade unions is different from those of Western ones. There are four basic functions of Chinese trade unions: to boost the development of the business and in turn that of the economy and so the broader society; to educate employees to improve their professional quality and personal character; to get employees involved in the decision-making process from business to government level, and to protect the rights of employees. The main purpose of the unions is not to fight the employer in the interests of employees — like some Western unions do — but to protect employees' rights while contributing to the development of the company in the first place. In Nanjing, many foreign companies that have set up unions, including Carrefour and Hilton, are grateful to those unions.

Du Yang, researcher at the Institute of Population and Labor Economics of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences: **A trade union is not the only way to protect employee rights**

I recently went to Guangdong Province to investigate and found that trade unions in foreign companies or joint ventures there actually do not involve themselves in crucial issues of labor relations like setting wages and working hours, which are regulated by the relevant laws of China and can be more effectively dealt with by government and labor law enforcement agencies. A trade union is important but not the only way to protect the rights of labor. In many cases, the government can play an important role in such protection.

Lei Rong, former employee at the Wal-Mart Supercenter in Kunming: **Wal-Mart employees live well without a union**

From the legal perspective, I think Wal-Mart in China should permit the establishment of trade unions. But from a personal perspective, I don't think whether or not there is union at the company makes much difference to me. When I worked there, I signed a contract with Wal-Mart and I was given a copy of that contract. All of my rights including the salary, promotion and welfare were stated in the contract, and with it in hand, I had evidence to claim my rights if they were not met. In contrast, in many other companies, be they state or private, employees are not handed a labor contract. By my experience, Wal-Mart does a better job protecting employee rights and adhering to laws than many other companies.

Home Schooling to Build a Better Housewife

Parents opt out, saying their 8-year-old needs more 'practical' life skills

By Zhou Ying

A decision to adopt home schooling for her 8-year-old girl by a mother in Chengdu, Sichuan province, has created a media debate about the gender issue and the extraordinary pressure on students in the age of the single child.

Her parents, among other things, want to teach Zhu Nannan to be an excellent housewife. "Actually she had studied at a key primary school for a year. But we found she wasn't happy at all during that time," the mother, who refused to be named, told *Chengdu Economic Daily* on Saturday.

"I don't think school is the only way for children to gain a useful education, and so I try to foster my child in my own way."

The father, surname Zhu but also refusing to be identified, said that as society develops, more girls will want to be a housewife in the future. "Even if they have to work, they will do something artistic, musical or so on."

He said the most important skill for girls is "how to deal with life, not exams and jobs". The parents argue that it is primary school education, not them, which is lagging behind the development of society.

"Nearly all parents feel dissatisfied with the education system. But few imagine they can teach their children themselves just as we do now," said Nannan's mother.

According to the parents, Nannan learns literature, maths and history in the morning at home. She has a choice of piano, swimming and dancing lessons in the afternoon. "I think what I am learning now is far more interesting than that of my classmates at school, and I really feel happy now," Nannan told *Chengdu Economic Daily* the same day.

The mother said they also

pay attention to aesthetic education. "We want to teach her how to enjoy life, and how to be a perfect woman in the future," she said proudly.

Xing Guang, a student of a high school attached to Beijing Normal University, **The most important thing a student acquires in school isn't knowledge.**

I totally agree that parts of the syllabus in primary school are indeed useless in our future life. At least for my classmates in primary school, the main courses that relate to final exams are quite important, such as Chinese, English and maths. But art, music and technology always got a chilly reception from pupils.

Take maths for example, the primary school syllabus after fourth grade is rarely used in real life. Basically, you can do just about everything you need to do in daily life if you master subtraction and addition.

But I don't agree with the parents' decision. The most important thing a student acquires in school rather than knowledge itself, is a scientific way of thinking. That's quite useful for the future.

Zheng Hong, father, **Gender education is very important**

Firstly, I advocate that the mother should apply a new kind of education: gender education (single-sex education that reinforces gender roles), quite rare in China now.

In my opinion, girls are gradually losing their ability to be a competent wife or mother after marriage. Some girls even regard it as shameful to enter the kitchen of the future. I think it is quite good for girls to accept all kinds of knowledge concerning life skills.

Although a quality education is very important, we should not neglect basic education at primary school. If her mother expects Nannan to become a

housewife in the future, she should realize that her daughter should acquire a high level of cultural accomplishment. If not, how can Nannan teach her own child in the future?

Secondly, I doubt if the girl can find a husband that will take her. Most successful men expect their wives to be college graduates. And if she fails to find a husband, then how can she get a job without a university graduation certificate?

Shou Yan, physics teacher at Beijing No.66 Middle/High School, **No access to entrance exam**

In China, if children do not have the right certificate, they cannot even take a middle school or university entrance exam. You cannot obtain that certificate by home schooling.

Actually a similar incident happened before. I heard some parents asked for a week's sick leave for their children to take them outside the school and broaden their horizons. Most parents gain experience studying abroad. I can totally understand their behavior.

But the incident mentioned in this article is quite special in that it's not worthy of repeating, because there is lack of a corresponding system in society. I mean she may be not admitted by society when she grows up.

Speaking of the syllabus at primary school, I think the classes are not that dull because the school organizes all kinds of activities for the children. But because of the limited places available at a key middle school, parents have to pressure their children.

Finally, I think parents should not devote all their energies to their children. The factors that influence children's development are quite complicated. So if your child of the future does not become the one you had hoped, you will be real-

ly disappointed and depressed.

Qin Xiaowen, researcher at Beijing Academy of Educational Sciences, **School is a source of happiness**

There is no doubt that the educational system has many problems, and education is far behind the rapid development of the economy.

But I have to say that the mother has narrowly misconstrued the function of a school. One important process for children during their juvenile period is that of socialization of individuals, and school is the right place for this task.

Children in school can learn how to deal with all kinds of problems, and they will learn how to interact with each other. I think this is the source of human happiness.

I personally regard the mother's behavior as escapism. She should not isolate her child from the world, although the real world is full of flaws. What she should teach her child is how to adapt instead of how to escape. **Paul Mooney**, American freelance writer residing in Beijing, **Home schooling is becoming increasingly popular**

Home schooling is becoming increasingly popular in the United States as more parents become dissatisfied with the education system there.

There are pros and cons to doing this. The biggest pro is that you can give your son or daughter a very focused education, but it does demand a lot of your own time as a parent.

My youngest daughter can do her reading assignments on her computer, submit her assignments online, and ask questions online with teachers who are standing by to help students. The biggest downside is that she sometimes feels lonely. She has no classmates or friends. She also has to be very disciplined to complete her assignments.

Money Grows on Trees?

Get-rich-quick schemes promise spectacular profits



Withered trees planted by Wanli Forest Company

By Wang Fang

A website slogan woos investors to buy up forest in Inner Mongolia with a heady promise: "Invest 100,000 yuan now and receive 160,000 yuan in pure profit in seven years."

But forestry bureau officials and local media are piling doubt on the promises of the Wanli Forest Company, using tree knowledge, maths and more maths.

A Wanli Forest Company pamphlet says their patented fast-growing poplar will turn into useful timber within seven years and at that time, the growers will gain about 15-30 cubic meters of wood from 66 trees in an area of 1 mu (0.16 of an acre)

Timber today fetches about 500-600 yuan a cubic meter, the pamphlet alleges, and thus the profit from each mu is guaranteed to be at least 7,500 yuan. With an investment of 2,000 yuan-3,000 yuan for each mu, that's still a whopping 20-50 percent profit: 10 times the current interest rate at your local Chinese bank.

Promised such unlikely profits, investors can't help but wonder if the risk is too high. Wanli says nope. The company explains on its website that it will maintain the high-yield forest and guarantees the final timber output. Furthermore, the price of the timber will almost certainly be higher in the near future. Thus, the company says it will buy back the timber from investors.

The plan, as presented, is flaw-

less.

"As long as you give me the money, you won't worry about anything but counting your money in seven years," a sales rep from Wanli told the *Beijing Today*.

Fairy tale figures

But Wang Tiecheng, a forestry engineer from the Beijing Forest Institute told the *Beijing Morning Post* the data provided by Wanli was not accurate, and the promised profit? Totally unreliable.

Wang says the average diameter of a tree is the usual measure for understanding the final volume of timber. He claims a one mu area can hold, at most, 40 trees, and that not all those trees can possibly reach the portended "average" diameter of 28 centimeters.

Wang maintains it is thus almost impossible for the company to grow 66 trees in the same area and achieve a 28-cm average diameter described in the pamphlet.

Instead, he predicts the average diameter of a fast-growing poplar planted to be much shorter than 28 centimeters. A poplar with a 28-centimeter diameter can produce 0.6 cubic meters of timber. But Wang's "more realistic" average of 21 centimeters produces at most only 0.3 cubic meters.

Wang's maths continues to make mulch out of the pamphlet: Hongshi Lumberyard in Jilin Province promises only 420 yuan — not 500 yuan — a cubic meter on a 28-centimeter diameter poplar. If Wang's right, then the average diameter of the trees planted by Wanli will prove well short of



A billboard advertisement featuring Chen Xianggui and

Photo by Photocome

28 centimeters. Thus, after seven years, investors will get back only 5,000 yuan for each mu. Deducting the 2,000-3,000 yuan capital, profits prove much smaller than those envisioned on the pamphlet.

Wang Qishun, boss of (Sengong Group) Forestry Business Operation, a state forestry development company in Jilin told the *Xiang Bao*, a Jilin-based newspaper: "It's a fairy tale to obtain so much profit from a fast-growing poplar in seven years".

As manager of the most profitable fast-growing poplar woods in the northeast China, he ought to know: the profits from his company's mu is only 5,000 yuan.

After 15 years.

'I demand an apology'

Wanli knows they need help from celebrities and officials in selling forest.

Thus the smiling faces of comedy screenwriter He Qingkui and TV star Gao Xiumin appear on the website and in pamphlets. They are vice presidents.

Wanli president Chen Xianggui even showed up as a supporting character on He's TV soap, "Liu Laogen".

Besides inviting celebrities to promote sales, Wanli also demon-

strates in their pamphlets that they enjoy government support. An investor, who declined to give her name, told *Beijing Today* that the picture of Chen Xianggui alongside Zhu Lieke, vice-director of the State Forestry Bureau made her buy her 10 mu. "The picture convinced me that their business was state supported."

And she's right. Kind of. In June 2003, the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee and the State Council jointly issued "Decision on Improving Forestry Development", the so-called "No.9 Document", which encourages private forestry development.

But it does not mean the State backs an investor's financial risk. For example, investors who obtain a forestry-right certificate can only plant trees in the prescribed plot. That means if one day, the price of timber tumbles, investors cannot do anything else with the land.

Outraged forestry bureau boss Zhu told Xiang Bao: "I don't remember either Chen Xianggui or the Wanli Forest Company. I demand they apologize."

Ma Dayi, chief of the general office of the State Forestry Bureau, says he heard a phone call from Chen Xianggui on October 20, admitting the photo was a fraud.

'We did not cheat our investors'

In response to the accusation and doubts raised by the media, Chen Xianggui says on the company website: "We did not cheat our investors".

In the statement, Wanli says it had invited Wang Haiyun as their lawyer to sue newspapers such as the *Xiang Bao* for 8 million yuan compensation in Tongliao Intermediate People's Court, Inner Mongolia last Tuesday.

He Qingkui acknowledges his honest public image is a key enticement for investors to buy up forest.

In an interview with the Northeastern News Net, He admitted the photo of Chen and Zhu was doctored by computer, but intriguingly, added it was not a fake.

"Honesty is my life," he said. "But I don't want to stay in Jilin anymore. I will transfer my hukou (residency card) soon." He asked investors to trust him and he would be responsible for their interests.

But the risk of 90,000 fast-growing poplars is too much for one tubby funnyman to bear.

Forest companies

According to an investigation by the *Beijing Today*, there are about 30 forest companies in Beijing and almost all of them use the same technique to draw investors: high profits and famous people in their advertisement.

For example, the pamphlet for the Extensive Forest Company tells investors that the price of the timber, with a diameter of 30 centimeters in 2010, will be 1,100 yuan per cubic meter. That is much higher, and much less reliable, than the Wanli wonder pamphlet.

These companies understand exactly how officials and stars boost investor confidence. Movie star Ge You can be seen every day after the CCTV Evening News promoting Extensive Forest Company, the most expensive commercial on air.

Another company, Beijing East Forest Technology Development Company, invites retired forestry experts and officials as their consultants to reinforce investor confidence.

A Beijing East Forest Technology Development sales rep, who declined to give his name, told *Beijing Today* that no matter what the papers say, he believed in seven years, he would see flourishing woods.

"You'll regret it if you don't invest now. Anyway, you will have your own forest in seven years."

By Dong Nan / Zhou Ying

Chinese professional football faces an unprecedented crisis after a series of pullouts from matches by football clubs and cancelled meetings with officials of the China Football Association (CFA). The crisis appeared to peak this week.

A critical meeting of all football club investors and CFA officials was held on Tuesday.

The CFA promised to reform the Chinese Super League by establishing a working party in early November.

Yan Shiduo, CFA vice president, pledged at the meeting that the CFA will open its books for all clubs to see this year.

"I accept the decision of CFA," said Xu Ming, owner of Dalian Shide football club. "Although it is not very satisfying, I understand reform should come step by step."

The CFA announced at the press conference after the meeting that they had agreed to end relegation, but that the rest of the season will continue as scheduled out of respect for football fans.

After the meeting, the CFA released a statement reiterating that clubs seeking to withdraw from matches will be severely punished.

Previously, clubs had threatened to withdraw if the CFA refused to postpone the rest of the season. Three clubs in particular — Dalian, Shenzhen and Beijing — are still threatening to not play.

"Those clubs that refuse to play remain entirely responsible for their actions," according to a press release the CFA faxed to *Beijing Today* at presstime last night.

Thus whether or not the season will ever finish remains an open question.

Two Shanghai teams on Tuesday gave two totally different answers.

Shenhua FC boss Dai Chunhua told *Oriental Sport Daily* after the press conference that his team would submit to the CFA decision. "We are ready for the next match, and we will not change our plan," he said.

But Shanghai Guoqi manager Cheng Yaodong had other ideas. "I personally believe that there is no other choice but to

'Anarchy' in the CFA

Authority promises reform after club, media and fan protests

postpone the season, although nobody is pleased to see that happen."

What started all this?

Fan anger has clearly reached boiling point with the CFA. But it was Beijing Hyundai's walkout from a Super League match on October 2 against Shenyang Jinde after what they described as "unfair treatment by the referee," that triggered the crisis.

After that, the club was docked three points from its league standing and the referee, Zhou Weixin, was suspended for the rest of the season.

To make matters worse, the China national football team lost to Kuwait 0-1 in World Cup qualifying match on Wednesday. The defeat dropped China into second place below Kuwait in the group, making it hard for China to make the next round.

More withdrawals

Following Beijing Hyundai's example, there were more walkouts and conflicts last weekend. The match between seven-time league champions Dalian and Shenyang Jinde was abandoned after half an hour. The home side, Dalian Shide, was leading the game 2-1 when Jinde's Chen Tao equalized under controversial circumstances in the 85th minute.

Dalian claimed that Chen had handled the ball and referee Yang Zhiqiang had ignored it deliberately. They refused to continue for 35 minutes, then Yang suspended the match.

After that, Dalian claimed what they did could not be called a "withdrawal" as the team did not leave the pitch. But the CFA decided that Dalian had made a deliberate withdrawal and sought to punish them even more severely than Beijing Hyundai.

The CFA announced its final decision on Wednesday. It awarded Shenyang Jinde a 3-0



Yan Shiduo, center, CFA vice president, refuses to postpone the season at the meeting on Tuesday. A fan (left) offers his opinion. Photo by Wei Tong

victory in the abandoned match, docked Dalian six points and fined the club 300,000 yuan. Lin Lefen, general manager of Dalian Shide, was banned from attending league matches for one year. This made it almost impossible for Dalian Shide to win the Super League Championship this season.

Soon after the decision, Lin announced it was unacceptable, and Dalian Shide would appeal to the principal committee of the CFA.

But Dalian's was not the only troubled match. On the same day, Liaoning Zhongyu were winning 2-1 against Shanghai Guoqi in Shenyang. Then in the 89th minute, Shanghai Guoqi's Wu Chengying shot at goal to score an apparent equalizer, which was promptly ruled offside by the referee's assistant and the referee Feng Wenqiang. The Shanghai Guoqi players walked off the pitch. And Feng whistled the match over.

"In fact, we meant to withdraw from the match at that time," said Wu Bing, assistant coach of Shanghai Guoqi to media after the match. "How could we continue under such an unfair referee?"

But Wang Guolin, general manager of Shanghai Guoqi, denied this later. He said the team members had been too angry about the result. Wang added it was unfair for the referee to whistle the match over, since at that time, there was still one minute left.

Finally in a match between Beijing Hyundai and Tianjin Masterkong in Tianjin, Masterkong's Wang Xiao received a second booking and automatic red card.

But Tianjin fans threw things on the pitch in protest and referee Li Fuchang was left with blood on his face. The match had to be halted for nine minutes. Tianjin Masterkong eventually won the game with 3-0.

Club investors want action

After a series of on-field conflicts, investors backing the seven clubs — Dalian Shide, Beijing Guoan club (owners of Hyundai), Shenzhen Jianlibao, Liaoning Zhongyu, Shanghai Zhongyuan, Qingdao Yizhong and Sichuan Guancheng — had written seven open letters to the CFA, the General Administration of Sports of China and fans, calling for reform, particularly in management and finance.

They had demanded the CFA issue a financial report this year. They had also demanded no relegation from the 12-club Super League matches this season and a postponement of the rest of the season.

"The environment of Super League matches is terrible now and fairness cannot be assured," according to one of the letters.

A meeting of 14 presidents of provincial football associations was held on Monday, the day before the critical CFA meeting. The presidents announced that they demanded overhaul of the CFA structure and that they were generally agreed on stopping relegation from the Super League this season.

A series of 13 documents, released by Dalian's Xu Ming, on October 17 supplied the meeting agenda.

The documents proposed steps to bring stability to the league, including opening up CFA financial reports from the last 10 years, setting up a body for the club representatives and stopping relegation this season.

CFA Vice President Yang Yimin applauded Xu's suggestions on Tuesday.

"I will support these reform suggestions, definitely," said Yang. "We hope for more beneficial suggestions from clubs and need time to discuss them carefully."

By Hester Xu and Yan Zhang

Yongdingmen, the Gate of Eternal Serenity, once again stands guard over south Beijing. Rebuilt recently to match its original grandeur – even re-using original bricks in original places – the restored gate tower has drawn attention to a 75-year-old retiree from the Beijing Film Studio.

Zhang Xiade painted Yongdingmen 40 years ago and thus made an invaluable contribution to the restoration of this magnificent gate tower. His research on city gates has enriched the city's cultural inheritance. Sitting in his dimly-lit study, with three sides of the wall entirely occupied by heavy bookshelves, he looks no different to any other Chinese intellectual.

But Zhang's eyes glitter as he unpacks two long flat cartons, one containing his landscape paintings and the other, his original pictures of the city wall and gate towers. There can be no doubt he captured something of old Beijing with his brush.

A consultant to the Beijing Bureau of Cultural Relics and one of the leading experts on the capital city wall, Zhang still receives visitors both from home and abroad, including *Beijing Today*.

Apprentice to art school

Born to an affluent capital city family in 1929, Zhang says he led a carefree childhood, interested in the ancient curios and paintings of the great masters that only prominent families could afford.

But his family's fortunes took a tumble during the Anti-Japanese War (1937-1945). As Zhang entered the first grade in middle school at age 11, the family couldn't afford his tuition. Instead, he was sent to Tianjin to become an apprentice.

Accustomed to alleys, Chinese courtyards, grey city walls and the lofty gate towers of old Beijing, Zhang didn't much care for modern Tianjin with its crisscrossing roads and western style buildings. The childhood *hutong* (alleys) of Beijing haunted his dreams.

Zhang returned to his home city only three times in the next six years. He worked in a small shop and then entered the largest department store in Tianjin owned by a famous local entrepreneur.

The life of an apprentice wasn't easy, but Zhang was able to read newspapers at the department store as a means to self-education.

In 1945, Zhang's cousin, Zhang Xianda, a former fighter pilot for the Guomindang, returned to Beijing.

Unhappy to see Zhang working as an apprentice, he suggested that he would support Zhang at college if he wanted. Zhang studied for the college examinations while working at the department store.

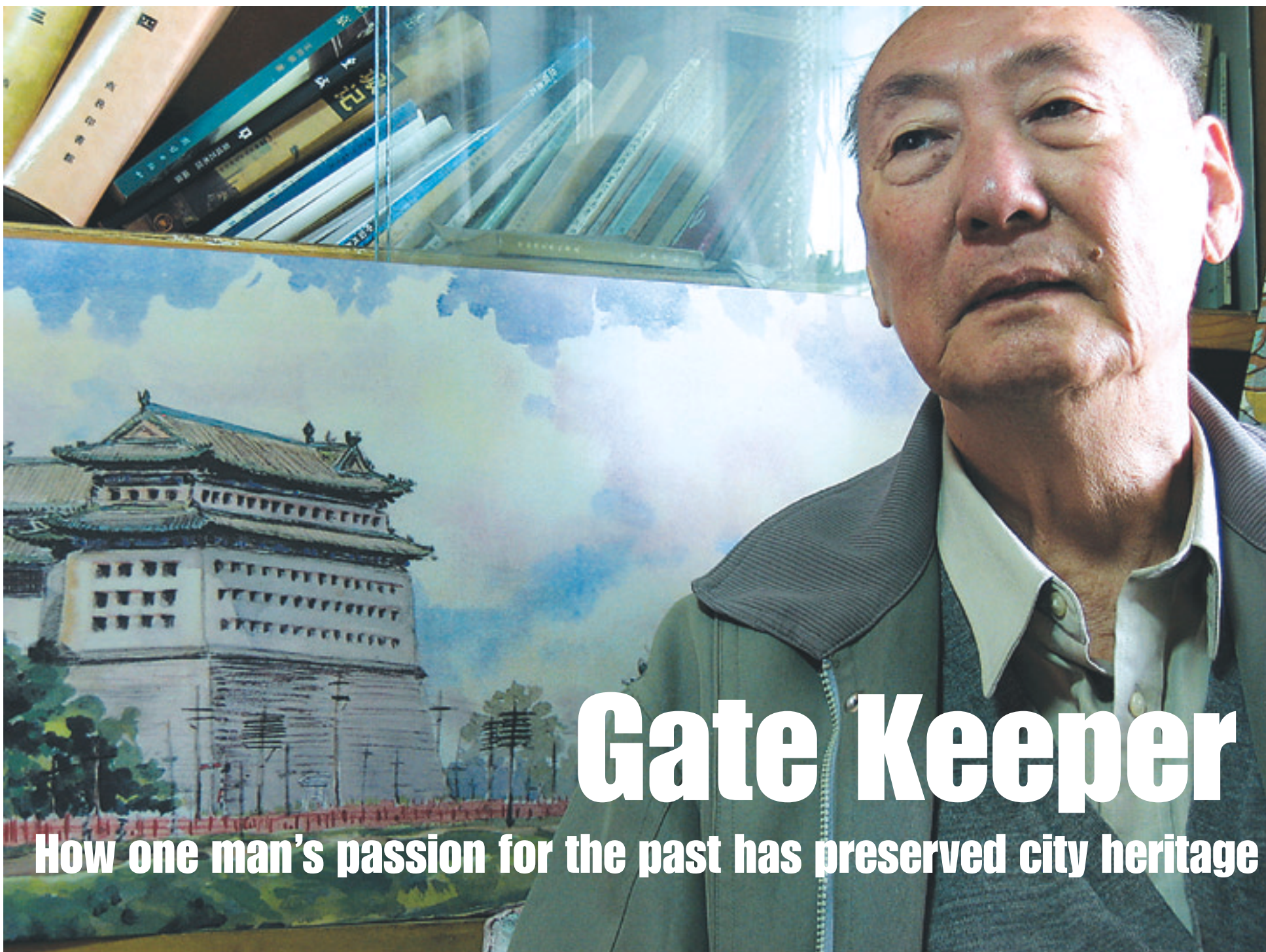
Remembering the curios and paintings of his home life as a child, Zhang had developed a passion for archaeology and the fine arts. In 1947, Zhang was admitted to the National Fine Arts College. Even today, Zhang still can't hide his excitement: "The names of the admitted students were to be listed in *New Life Daily* in Beijing, but in Tianjin, I had to wait until 4 pm to read the paper.

"It was just by pure chance that a board member of the department store coming to our shop that morning already had the paper. I remember as soon as he went out, he left the paper on his sofa and I pounced on the paper to see if my name was there!"

Art designer in film studio

Zhang went on to study under the greatest painters of that time. Unable to afford expensive oil colors, Zhang had to switch to the Department of Applied Fine Arts. In 1950, he graduated a year early with distinction and was assigned to work as an art designer in the newly founded Beijing Film Studio.

As an apprentice to chief set designer Qin Wei and then as chief set designer himself, Zhang worked with many camera crews

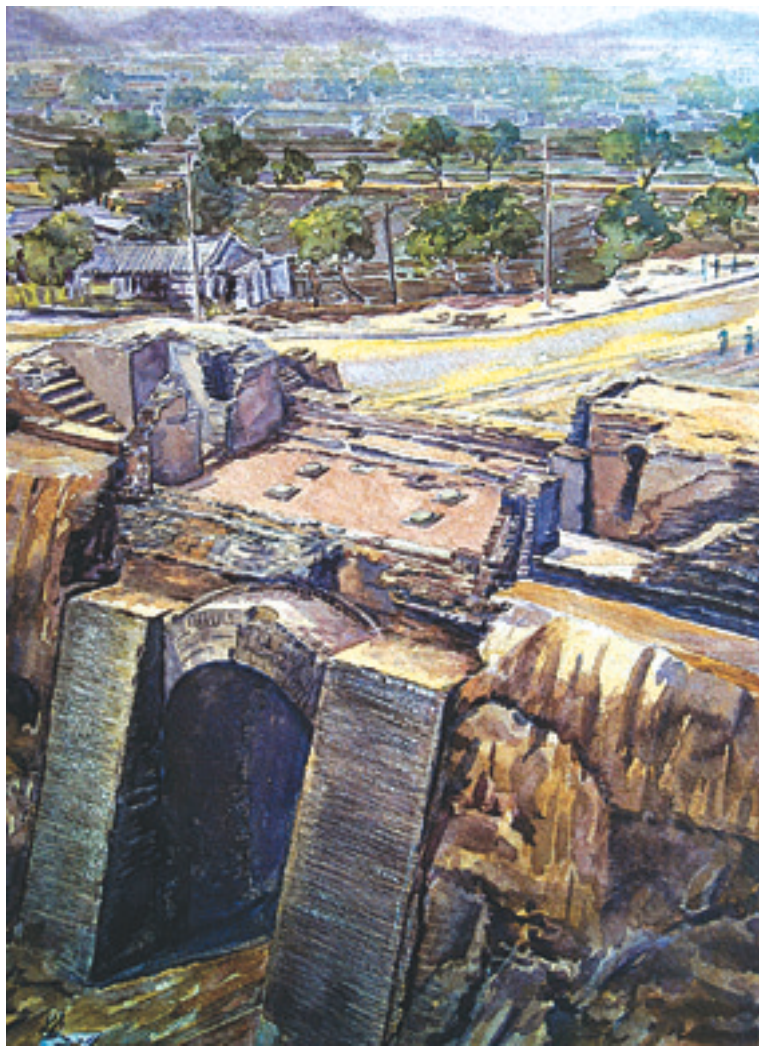


Gate Keeper

How one man's passion for the past has preserved city heritage



Above: Yongdingmen
Right: Di'anmen
Below: Heyimen
Pictures by Zhang Xiade
Photo by Yan Zhang



on some of the best movies produced by the studio.

But set decoration could never match his passion for painting landscapes and reading magazines about archeology and cultural relics.

Carrying a soft green shoulder bag, containing a small pad, an iron eisel, some watercolors and brushes, Zhang painted whatever scenery he encountered on location with the camera crew.

Guardian of the city wall

Zhang said he had never really planned to paint the city wall and gate towers. Events overtook him in 1952. After hearing that Di'anmen Gate was going to be demolished in 1952, he went

edly: everyone in the studio was ordered to go to a patriotic exhibition of a captured Soviet tank from a border conflict in Zhenbaodao Island.

Best of all, the visit was unaccompanied. Zhang immediately bicycled to Xizhimen to see Heyimen on his way to the exhibition. Then after visiting the tank, Zhang went back again and made a quick sketch of the gate on a small piece of paper.

A few years later, he did a watercolour based on the sketch. Today this painting is among a few treasured historical records left of Heyimen along with a few photos taken by archeologists from the Bureau of Cul-

Three Kingdoms – meaning to work one job while longing for another – to describe his work on archeology.

Although he admires archeologists and admits he cannot match their expertise, he is also proud of his own 'amateur' talents.

In 1974, Zhang was invited to work at the Bureau of Cultural Relics. His first assignment was to categorize unearthed artefacts in Dabaotai Han Mausoleum in the suburbs of Beijing.

One day, taking pictures of Chinese characters found inside a coffin, he suddenly caught sight of a small round object on the wooden wall of the tomb chamber.

He picked it up and examined it closely. Among the cracks on the surface were several Chinese characters representing the title of an emperor's reign.

He had no idea at the time of the importance of his discovery. Although the mausoleum had already been identified as belonging to one of the lords of the Han Dynasty (206BC-220AD), no one was sure which lord. Zhang's finding reversed a prevailing belief and provided the only clue to the true identification of the mausoleum. Zhang says colleagues began to see him in a new light and joked that "an amateur has beaten all the experts."

Zhang's expertise was again put to the test in 1975 when a rare bronze ax with an iron blade was unearthed in the 3,300-year-old Liujiahe Tomb of the Shang Dynasty (17th century BC - 11th century BC) in Fangshan District, Beijing. Many of the leading experts assumed the iron used on the ax was produced artificially.

But Zhang believed the iron came from a meteor, and sent the ax to be analyzed in an atomic energy research institute where his sister Zhang Xianlu worked. His theory was proved right by analysis.

Shortly after that, he published his first thesis "Examination of Liujiahe Bronze Ax with Iron Blade Discovered in Pinggu County".

In 1979, having worked six years at the beloved bureau and written more than 40 theses, Zhang reluctantly returned to Beijing Film Studio to take a professional exam, the required practice in state companies in China and the product of a planned economy.

to the gate and spent three hours painting a watercolor landscape. After that, he managed to paint pictures of all the gates of Beijing before they were eventually pulled down.

He was especially thankful to mentor Qin Wei, who often took him to paint the city walls and gates together. With inside information from Ouyang Hongying, Qin Wei's wife, who worked in the State Council, Zhang would race out to paint a gate before the trucks arrived.

The last painting of his city wall collection came in 1968 when construction peaked on the Number 1 subway line that demolished the wall.

One day, Zhang's wife, whose company was located beside Xizhimen, told him that an ancient gate – Heyimen – built during the Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368) had been discovered inside the gate tower of Xizhimen during its demolition by subway line construction workers.

This was 1968, the third year of the Cultural Revolution, and the artist Zhang was under constant supervision at the studio. He knew only too well that a visit was out of the question. But a chance came quite unexpect-

tural Relics.

Time Machine

Besides painting real scenery, some of Zhang's paintings are created from an artistic combination of historical photos and his imagination. A painting of Donghuamen represents a masterpiece of such ingenuity.

The gate was burnt down in 1911 without any photographic record.

But when Zhang saw a photo from an old newspaper showing only the roof of the gate with most of the lower part blocked out of view by a large crowd of people, he was able to paint a picture of the whole gate.

"I used my imagination to fill in the lower part, the street in front of the gate and the stores opposite," says Zhang.

Many years later, an old Chinese woman returning from abroad saw the painting and exclaimed: "This is the place where I lived as a child. It's exactly the same!" His paintings of city walls drew attention overseas, exhibiting in Japan.

'Amateur' defeats experts

"To stay bodily in Cao Cao's camp, while the heart belongs to the Han Dynasty": Zhang quotes the old Chinese saying from the

By Peng Juan

A joint team of researchers from Japan and Mongolia announced earlier this month that they have uncovered the remains of what may be the mausoleum of Genghis Khan (1167-1227) on a Mongolian steppe 250 kilometers east of Ulan Bator, capital of Mongolia.

If the team succeeds in unearthing the tomb of the great conqueror, the find will rank as one of the greatest archaeological discoveries of the century, experts say, comparable to the unearthing of the lost city of Troy and Tutankhamen's tomb.

Clues to an underground secret

The underground complex is at a site called Avraga, near Delgerhaan village in Hentiy Province, Mongolia. The whole archeological area extends 1,200 meters from east to west and 500 meters from north to south. The location and scale correspond with historical documents from China and Persia relating to the mausoleum of Genghis Khan.

The site of a shrine found on the steppe dates back to between the 13th and 15th centuries. Below the shrine is a stone foundation measuring 11 by 11 meters, which is believed to be part of the original foundation of a mausoleum. Around the base researchers have dug four pits, each measuring about 1.5 meters in diameter, which contain charred bones and ashes of horses, sheep and other animals.

According to historical texts, when a Mongolian monarch died, officials conducted a ritual in which horses, sheep, horse milk, alcohol and silk fabric were put into a hole and burned every day over a period of three years. Further radar scanning of the area suggests there are more than one hundred similar pits at the site.

Within a scope of 11 meters around the square base, cornerstones and holes for pillars were found near the center of the shrine remains, with no tiles or bricks, from which researchers speculate that a square tent should have been attached to wooden columns on the site.

Inside the shrine, there are remains of a 40-centimeter-high stone wall, within which are traces of ash. This and the large quantities of charred horse bones nearby verify that sacrificial rituals were conducted here in ancient times, according with historical documents that describe such memorial services to mark the death of Genghis Khan.

Other unearthed articles include porcelain, ear-rings and bronze accessories as well as an incense burner bearing a dragon – the symbol of an emperor.

According to Shinpei Kato, head of the joint research team and professor emeritus at Tokyo's Kokugakuin University, the discovery could "pin-point the long sought after tomb of Genghis Khan, which is probably located within a radius of 12 kilometers from the shrine, as well as the tombs of his descendants."

Buried mystery of centuries

The final resting place of the Great Khan has been one of archaeology's enduring mysteries for centuries.

Genghis Khan, or the "Khan of Khans," is one of history's greatest conquerors. He unified the Mongol tribes to establish the largest continuous land empire – later known as the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) – the world has ever seen. In a span of 20 years between the end of the 12th and the beginning of the 13th centuries, Genghis Khan ruled over everything that lay between the eastern coast of China and the Caspian Sea.

In 1277, Genghis Khan, at the age of 65, attacked the Western Xia Kingdom (now China's Ningxia region) but encountered strong resistance. He died from injuries suffered in a fall from his horse. He was buried secretly by his generals who went to extraordinary lengths to conceal the grave.

Legend has it that on August 18, 1227, a huge ox-drawn cart carrying a yurt guarded by 800 devoted soldiers, carried the body of Genghis Khan into the remote mountains. The bodyguards killed every person encountered by the funeral procession as well as



The Genghis Khan Mausoleum, in which articles of the ruler's clothing is buried, lies 185 kilometers south of Baotou, in Inner Mongolia.

Detail of a portrait of Genghis Khan

Finding Genghis

Searchers zero in on the long-lost tomb of the great conqueror

Archaeologists say they may be close to solving one of the world's enduring mysteries: locating the burial site of Genghis Khan, one of the most famous conquerors in history.



Fragments of a white porcelain bowl with dragon patterns unearthed at the site.



Members of the joint Japanese and Mongolian research team dig into the steppe 250 kilometers east of the Mongolian capital, Ulan Bator. Photos provided by Peng Juan

all the 1,000-odd workers who built the mausoleum and the servants who attended the funeral. After the Khan's body was placed in the grave and it was covered with earth, thousands of horses were driven back and forth over the site, trampling the tomb area. Later, a forest was planted over the entire area. When the soldiers returned to Karakorum, the ancient Mongolian capital, they, in turn, were slaughtered by other soldiers so as to keep the grave site secret.

Genghis Khan has lain undisturbed in his unmarked grave ever since. However a 5.5-hectare mausoleum was built 185 kilometers south of Baotou in Inner Mongolia, in which only his clothing is buried.

Fabled treasure

Over the past several hundred years, the true burial site of the legendary Khan has been a source of fascination for researchers and explorers worldwide.

All ancient burial rituals of the monarchs were carried out secretly in accordance with the Mongolian custom, and there are no written records of the precise location of the mausoleum. To date, not one burial site of a Yuan Dynasty ruler has been discovered.

If the site does turn out to contain Genghis Khan's remains as the archaeologists suspect, it is likely also to hold the tombs of other leading members of his clan, including his grandson Kublai Khan, who extended the Mongol empire into Central Asia, Russia and the Middle East. According to ancient texts, 13 or 14 Khan warriors, including Genghis and Kublai, are buried in the same place.

Many archeologists believe that Genghis Khan was buried with a fabulous treasure collected from uncountable Mongol conquests, which might well prove to be as spectacular as the terracotta warriors and horses unearthed in the Xi'an Qin Mausoleum. However, not a single bejeweled dagger, nor one artifact of the great warrior has surfaced so far.

"Genghis Khan conquered Eurasia and built a massive empire. There had to have been a great deal of interaction between east and west at the time, in terms of culture and the exchange of goods," Shinpei Kato said in an interview. "If we find the items that were buried with him, we could write a new page for world history."

If the team does succeed in finding the tomb of the great conqueror, it would be an unprecedented discovery "with fabulous finds that would be enough to study for hundreds of years," said Kato.

Long awaited breakthrough

The true burial place of Genghis Khan has remained unknown for centuries, despite the efforts of many expeditions that have spent many years and millions of dollars in a fruitless search.

Again and again archaeologists have been forced to abandon their search for Khan's grave over protests that the excavation would disturb the "father of the Mongolians." According to Mongolian tradition, violating ancestral tombs destroys the soul of the person buried and the protection that soul provides to the Mongolian people.

In 1993, Japanese archaeologists terminated a search for the tomb after a poll in Ulan Bator found the project unpopular. The most recent failed expedition was led by Maury A. Kravitz, a former commodities trader and lawyer from Chicago. The American-financed expedition stopped work in 2002 after being accused by a prominent Mongolian politician of desecrating the graves of ancient rulers.

This year's breakthrough was made by a joint team of Japanese and Mongolian researchers, including experts from Kokugakuin University, Niigata University and the Mongolian Academy of Sciences. The exploration of the Avraga site has been underway since 2001, using a range of advanced technologies including radar, mine detectors and satellite imaging.

The team is now waiting for permission from the Mongolian government to continue the archeological research around the site, which might be the door to uncovering the long buried secrets of Genghis Khan.

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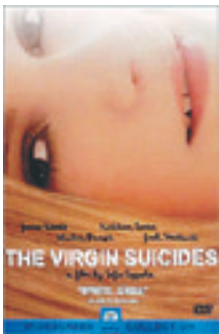
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What's on DVD



Hana and Alice

Written and directed by Shunji Iwai, who created the international success *All About Lily Chou*, *Hana and Alice* is a delicate comedy about two childhood friends who fall for the same guy. This limited edition includes a bonus disc containing the short-version of the main feature, making-of featurette, theatrical trailer, and TV spots. Japanese with Chinese and English subtitles. DVD 9



The Virgin Suicides

A poignant story about the mysterious existence and death of five sisters living in American suburbia in the '70s. Sofia Coppola made her directorial debut with this film in 1999 starring Kirsten Dunst, Josh Hartnett, James Woods, and Kathleen Turner. Special features include *The Making Of The Virgin Suicides* featurette and photo gallery. English with French and Chinese subtitles. DVD 9.



Garfield: The Movie

Based on the cartoon strip about a fat and egotistical house cat named Garfield, the movie is live-action, except for Garfield who is computer-animated, with the voice of Bill Murray. English with English, Chinese, Spanish and Korean subtitles. DVD 5



Empire of the Wind, The First Chinese Musical?

By Jacqueline Yu

The name of Zhang Guo-tian's brand new musical, *Feng Di Guo (Empire of the Wind)*, has a grand ring to it. Even more grand is Zhang's claim that this is the first "real" Chinese musical.

If you decide to see the play, go with an open mind and remember that you are going to see a poet's show rather than a commercial story-telling entertainment, which is the real point of attraction.

Based on Chinese legends about love and hate between fairies and humans, the story tells about Feng Yu, who becomes estranged from her fellow deities, kills herself, and is reincarnated as the mother goddess Nuwa, who leads her human offspring to the peaceful and fertile Yellow River valley.

Facing obstructions from gods and monsters, she is assisted along the way by her devoted lover, Gou Mang, the god of wood and youth, who dies while protecting Feng Yu and her people. During a battle between two gods, the sky breaks and Feng Yu feels the peace of her empire is threatened, so she goes to mend the sky. During her absence, some ministers in the court organize a coup, and on her return, Feng Yu is executed.

Zhang is a self-confessed hunk, or hoodlum, of Beijing's theater circles, whose every production manages to stir up a hot debate.

Breaking away from stereotype productions based on Broadway type musicals, Zhang says, "People are accustomed to musicals in which songs and

music are supporting roles for acting. I believe in the operatic musical, in which, music and songs push the whole story forward."

Another challenge is education - actors may specialize in acting, or dancing, or singing, but few can master all three, he says, implying that if the voices are not so operatic or the dancing lacks a little in variation, don't blame those kids, whose average age is 24.

Whatever may be lacking in the performance, there is definitely no shortage of energy. "None of my cast has performed in a musical before," Zhang said, "but their progress is surprising."

And the most surprising discovery is Liu Tianchi, who plays the role of Feng Yu. Liu is a teacher at the Central Academy of Drama, from which she graduated, and has appeared in several of Zhang's productions, including *Che Guevara* and other experimental works. Liu's full and strong voice is a bright point in the play for all the audience. Though her costume doesn't reflect the growth of her character from a teenage girl into a mother and a leader of empire, and she is less than convincing as a young girl, her portrayal of a strict mother and a charismatic empress is an unqualified success.

Wang Bo, also a graduate from the Central Academy and now a member of the National Theater Company, plays Gou Mang. As a non-professional singer, he delivers a very polished performance of all his beautiful love songs, managing

sometimes to sound a little like Hong Kong pop star Jacky Cheung.

The tunes and the plot are both simple and easy to remember, if taken separately. But maybe because there is too much philosophical discussion and two many beautiful songs, the musical as a whole lacks clarity. And that's maybe why, after the first three free shows, many audience members stood up during the post-performance discussion and asked Zhang and the others the same question in a variety of ways, "What are you trying to say?"

"If all the audience knew what I meant, I wouldn't need to write this story. I want to awaken people's spirit and strengthen their personal belief, using the musical to recreate a fairy tale, a myth, in which there is a person like Feng Yu who has a totally free spirit, resists conformity, and dares to hold on to her dream," is Zhang's response.

The magic of *Empire of the Wind* is, despite its lack of polish, despite it being "difficult" and despite the complaints of critics (most of whom consider Broadway style musicals to be the epitome of what a musical should be), having seen it, you just want to see it again, because it looks so fresh.

So go and see *Empire of the Wind*. You might just come away thinking - maybe Zhang is right, maybe this is the first real Chinese musical.

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WORLDWIDE



Ashlee Simpson

SNL' Gaffe Exposes Simpson's Vocal Aid

Singer Ashlee Simpson's "extra help" may have been exposed when a *Saturday Night Live* audience heard her voice singing the wrong song while she held a microphone at her waist.

Her record company blamed a computer glitch and she blamed her band for Sunday morning's incident, which cut off her planned performance of the song *Autobiography* on the network comedy show.

Simpson had performed her hit single *Pieces of Me* without incident earlier in the show. When she came back a second time, her band started playing *Autobiography* while the first lines of her singing *Pieces of Me* could be heard again. (AP)



Bill Clinton

Clinton Feels 'Good' as He Goes to Aid Kerry

Former US president Bill Clinton, appearing thinner seven weeks after open heart surgery, said he feels "good" and wants to campaign this week to help John Kerry win the White House.

"I feel good. My chest is normally a little tender in the morning. I get up and walk around. I feel better immediately," the 58-year-old Democrat said in an interview with ABC.

His wife, New York Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, "doesn't want me to do too much. I don't either. I want to do this.

Senator Kerry asked me to do it and I want to do it." (AFP)

Grudge Delivers Shock at Box Office

The Grudge, a low-budget horror movie starring Sarah Michelle Gellar, delivered an additional shock by selling \$40 million worth of tickets in its first three days at the North American box office.

The Columbia Pictures project, a remake of a Japanese haunted-house thriller that was released in the United States earlier this year, took over the No. 1 slot from the cartoon *Shrek*, which had been top movie for the past three weeks.



Sarah Michelle Gellar

Gellar, perhaps best-known for playing the title character in TV's *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, plays an American in Tokyo who must outwit a ghoulish presence. The PG-13-rated film was directed by Takashi Shimizu, who also made the original, *Ju-On*. Bruer said the remake cost less than \$10 million to produce, and a sequel is in the cards. (Reuters)

Sopranos' Schirripa Signs TV Deal

Another cast member of *The Sopranos* is headed for a prime-time comedy. Steve Schirripa, who plays Bobby "Bacala" Bacallieri on the *Steve Schirripa* HBO series, has signed a deal with Disney's Touchstone TV to star in a comedy based on his book, *A Goomba's Guide to Life*.

The production company is currently searching for a writer to adapt the book for television. The book is about stereotypes of Italian-Americans, or 'goombas'. *The Sopranos* is scheduled to end its run after its next season.

Earlier this year, actress Drea de Matteo left the mob drama to star opposite Matt LeBlanc in his *Friends* spin-off, *Joey*. De Matteo's character, Adriana, was killed off in last season of *The Sopranos*. (AP)

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Soaring Demand Draws More Overseas Schools



British Council Beijing debuted the online IELTS registration system at the China Education Expo 2004 held last weekend.
Photo by Photocom

By Ayi

Chinese students have more choices for pursuing education overseas than ever, as evidenced by the expanded ranks of countries that participated in the fifth China Education Expo held last weekend in Beijing's International Convention Center.

More than 400 universities, colleges and other educational institutions from 28 countries took part, ranging from experienced players like the UK, US, Australia and New Zealand to first-timers including Argentina, Turkey and the Philippines.

During the two-day event, over 60 seminars and introductions covered various schools, countries' education industries, visa application procedures and how to advance one's career through studying abroad.

As part of the Year of French Culture in China, which started

earlier in the month, EduFrance, the education promotion agency of the French government, escorted 150 universities and colleges, nearly all the country's institutions of higher education, to the expo. There was much talk in the air between Chinese schools and their French counterparts about opening joint programs in this country.

Though less represented than France, the UK made its presence known, as British Council-organized exhibitions by 62 schools occupied the second floor of the exhibition hall. Many Chinese are currently studying in the UK and more are bound to make the journey, lured by the prospects of pure English and new one-year internships available to foreign students.

More than 60,000 Chinese students headed abroad for education in 2002 alone, according to figures from China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Study abroad fever is only spreading, with the increasing availability of vocational training and language learning. Last year, the embassies of Ireland, the US and the UK in Beijing issued nearly 40,000 student visas between them, and all indications show that the flood of students is only rising.

France Takes Star Spot at Expo

— Interview with Zong Wa, director of China Center for International Educational Exchange (CCIEE)

Beijing Today: What was the highlight of this year's Expo?

Zong Wa: As it is the Year of French Culture in China, France was the star. EduFrance organized 150 educational institutions to participate in the expo.



Photo by Ayi

At forums, over 80 French principals and vice chancellors expressed great enthusiasm about cooperating with their Chinese counterparts.

BT: What concrete steps have been taken towards Sino-French educational cooperation?

Zong: France agreed to further open six areas of vocational education to Chinese students, namely fashion, wine, perfume, arts, food and construction engineering.

Both sides also agreed to further open high school education to each other. This is important, as China's basic education system enjoys a strong reputation worldwide, which will help us promote the domestic education industry around the globe.

BT: How active were the US and UK delegations?

Zong: The US sent 30 universities and 20 presidents to the expo. They discussed further training of Chinese university presidents and school principals in the US.

For the UK representatives, training and regular communication between principals and vice chancellors was clearly a top priority.

BT: There was even a delegation from Argentina!

Zong: That indicates the diversification of Chinese students' potential destinations for further education abroad. We welcome more Latin American countries to open to Chinese students.

BT: What interest did the guests show in joint educational programs and courses in China?

Zong: China just recently set rules for joint educational programs in this country. Australia, France and the UK have expressed interest in opening joint courses, programs and even campuses in China. We should see some progress in coming months.

BT: What are the latest developments regarding Chinese studying abroad?

Zong: As the government is sending more high-ranking government officials abroad for training, the number of government-supported students will increase and become a major part in the current 'going abroad' wave.

Diversification of destinations is another trend. Aside from Argentina, Turkey, Estonia, Mexico, the Philippines and Thailand were among the countries represented at this year's expo.

BT: Is the expo a traveling event?

Zong: The expo has toured Beijing and Qingdao this week and is now in Shanghai. It will go to Nanjing, Chengdu and Guangzhou in coming days.

France: Right Time, Right Place



By Zhang Nan

Everywhere you look in Beijing these days, there is likely to be something at least vaguely French. The country is in the limelight thanks to the opening of the Year of French Culture and French universities are not missing the boat, organizing a major exhibition with the help of the French embassy and EduFrance at the China Education Expo.

It was the first time for the French government to hold an education exhibition in China and 150 schools participated.

Among the institutions involved

were around 40 comprehensive universities, 30 professional business colleges, 25 engineering colleges and some professional schools of applied knowledge and language schools.

According to figures provided by EduFrance Beijing, around 10 percent of the two million students in France are from other countries. That figure is relatively low among Western countries, as 28 percent of the US student body is international students and the figure is 14 percent in the UK.

"The French government attaches great importance to attracting more international students," said Pierre

Yang, director of EduFrance Beijing. "We intend to increase the percentage to 25 to 30 percent."

Yang noted that education in France had definite advantages. "Diplomas from French schools are recognized in China and around the world.

Students can enjoy free medical insurance in France. Many courses are taught in English. France's long history creates a stimulating, comfortable living and studying environment. The country's unique artistic history and environment can also help some students fulfill their dreams of becoming artists.

Throughout the expo, French



Photo by Ayi

professional schools, such as fashion design and film schools, drew many visitors. Many people checked out the language schools, because most courses in France are taught in French, meaning learning the language is necessary before starting some studies.

UK: Cradle for English Learning



By Xie Lixue

Nearly every Chinese student with dreams of learning overseas is familiar with at least one or two advantages of choosing the UK as a destination. No wonder there are so many Chinese studying in the country.

More than 70 universities and colleges took part in last week's expo, covering the second floor of the International Exhibition Center with their booths, where representatives introduced their schools and talked to would-be students.

The UK's education system enjoys a well-earned reputation for top academics, effective study approaches and dedication to quality. Every year, the government assesses the qualifications of all teachers and the quality of every school. The results are then released to the public to give prospective students reliable information for making informed choices.

A long history of cultivating creative, independent thinkers is another main attraction of education in the UK.

"I think the experience of going abroad will be helpful for my child," said the mother of a young girl. "And England is our top choice."

Students in the UK decide what to study themselves and are expected to not sit silently during lectures but to speak up, participate and throw new ideas back and forth on the way to developing their own modes of thought that will mold their futures.

The large delegation at last week's expo represented only a fraction of the educational opportunities open to Chinese students in the UK.



Photo by Photocom

The country is home to more than 180 universities and colleges, 500 schools of continuing education and 600 boarding schools. Materials on the website www.educationuk.org.cn can help students wade through this sea of options to make choices best suited for them and their careers.

continued on page 13

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Continued from page 12



By Zhang Nan
Twenty four
Australian

universities and schools participated in the expo.

Australia has become a top study destination for people from all over the world, enrolling seven percent of all foreign students around the globe.

However, recent rising tuition fees have taken some

Australia: Rising Costs Have Little Impact

toll on international student enrollment. A report on the study abroad web site www.liuxue.net indicates that the number of international students registered at Australian universities this year is down five to 10 percent.

Many of the Australian universities at the expo said

they were not worried.

"Although fees have risen, they are still lower than tuition costs in most European countries," said Amy Shih, student services officer at the University of Adelaide.

Shih told *Beijing Today* that most Australian universities offered scholarships both to

graduates and undergraduates.

Two juniors at a Chinese university who recently applied to study in Australia said they were not concerned about the costs.

"One of the reasons that we choose Australian universities to continue our studies was their lower costs compared with

the UK and other European countries," one said.

Her friend added, "Besides, there are great universities in Australia and a lot of Chinese students. It's easier for us to meet Chinese friends and get used to our new lives and classes."



By Xie Lixue
Some 35 Kiwi
education

institutions including all eight universities, eight polytechnics, eight high schools and eleven private schools converged on last weekend's expo.

Alistair Corzier, education counselor at the New Zealand embassy in Beijing, told prospective students his country was implementing a

New Zealand: Soaring Vistas for Study

new scholarship policy and stricter rules for student security and had published the first Chinese version of the *Guide to Studying in New Zealand* to offer young people advice on applying and studying.

"The safe environment, clean air and green mountains

are the most attractive features for international students," said Farida Memon, international marketing administrator at the University of Canterbury.

High schools in the country offer similar advantages. Louis Borok, director of international students at the Westlake Boys

High School, wowed the crowd with pictures of a beautiful seaside campus with a river running through the grounds and students doing all kinds of fun activities.

"We have exchange students from 48 nations, such as Thailand, Indonesia, Japan, France and Germany. There

are many after-class activities available, including drama clubs, sports events and – don't be surprised – special cooking lessons for boys," Borok pitched.



By Zhang Nan
An impressive
12 percent of the

students learning abroad around the world are studying in Germany.

Yet the country was only adequately represented at the China Education Expo 2004 with 15 universities and schools participating.

"Compared with the number of participants from other countries like UK, Australia and New

Germany: Hard to Beat Free

Zealand, the German pavilion had relatively few participants," Benni Ni, a consultant from DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service Center) told *Beijing Today* last Friday.

That did not keep the pavilion from drawing crowds of prospective students, eager to get information and face-to-face advice from university

representatives.

"German education has real advantages, such as the wide range of subjects in universities and the high quality of academics," said Frauke Dittmann, marketing director for DAAD. "One very attractive factor, namely free education in German schools, is a major reason why many students

decide to go there to study."

Generally speaking, students have to spend four to five years to graduate from German universities, but the fact that there are no tuition fees makes that far less painful a prospect.

"German universities also have English-taught courses. Thus, it is not necessary for

every student to learn German," added Dittmann.

The German government has adopted a series of policies to attract more international students in recent years, trying to ensure they will have comfortable, convenient conditions for living, studying and conducting research in the country.



By Zhao Hongyi
Five Turkish
universities took

part in this year's expo, trying to expand the country's ranks of more than 60,000 international students that represent an interesting mix of Middle Eastern, European and Asian origins appropriate to Turkey's geographic location.

"Turkey is a place where East meets West, where you can find high quality education and

Turkey: Where East Meets West

great cultural diversity," said Dr. Isa Ozkan, a professor from Gazi University.

Tuition fees at Turkey's 53 public universities run a rock-bottom \$800 to \$1,500 per year for undergraduate and graduate studies. "The government provides subsidies," Ozkan explained.

The country's 23 private universities charge higher fees of \$5,000 to \$12,000 a year, but

offer many scholarships and are still quite reasonable compared to schools in nations further west.

Living costs are similarly low, normally running around \$300 per month for staying on campus and \$250 to \$500 a month for living off campus.

Both public and private universities provide English courses to international

students. Around 200 Chinese students are currently studying in Turkey.

Turkey uses the American accreditation system and is applying for EU membership, meaning diplomas earned in the country are acceptable in the US and Europe. "You can use Turkey as a pathway to finding a career in the EU or US," Dr. Yavuz Yaman from the Middle

East Technology University said.

Learning the Turkish language is a must only for students interested in learning about the history and culture of the country and the Middle East. One year of language training should cost around \$1,000.

More information on studying in Turkey is available at: www.studyturkey.metu.edu.tr.



By Zhao Hongyi
Fourteen
universities and

colleges from Malaysia participated in the expo under the leadership of the country's Ministry of Higher Education.

Because it is a Commonwealth country, Malaysia provides great opportunities for students to further their educations in other English speaking nations.

Moreover, many European, American and Australian

Malaysia: Flexibility, Accessibility, Hospitality

universities, like the UK's University of Nottingham and Australia's Monash University and Swinburne University, have branches in the country.

Another feather in the cap of Malaysian education is that three years is all it takes to get a bachelor's degree.

"You can either spend the three years in Malaysia, or two years in Malaysia and one

year in another Commonwealth country, or one year in Malaysia and two years in another Commonwealth country," noted Robani bin Mokhsin, assistant director of Malaysia's Ministry of Higher Education.

Annual tuition costs for a master's student average around 25,000 ringgit, roughly equal to 50,000 yuan, and yearly living expenses run around

20,000 to 30,000 ringgit. "This is not expensive compared with any western country," Robani said.

Student visa applications are easy to process and there are no English proficiency requirements for entering the country.

By the end of 2003, there were nearly 40,000 international students in

Malaysia, including 12,300 Chinese.

Some 34 private and 16 public universities and colleges in Malaysia are recognized and certified by the Chinese embassy in Kuala Lumpur.

"This means those 50 education institutions can freely recruit students in China," Robani told *Beijing Today*.



By Zhao Hongyi
"China's
education market

provides us a 'window of opportunity' to strengthen bilateral economic and trade ties," said Thomas Aquino, undersecretary for trade and industry of the government of the Philippines at an expo seminar.

English, engineering, maritime and business management were among the strongest subjects offered in the

Philippines: New, Not Late

Philippines, Aquino said.

The Philippines is the third largest English speaking country in the world and English is taught at all levels in Filipino schools, he added.

The country's Center for International Expositions and Missions (CITEM) led six universities and education institutions to take part in the

China expo and try to attract domestic students hoping to pursue English or business courses abroad.

Among the schools on hand were Far Eastern University, Philippine Women's University, the Royal Institute of Education and Our Lady of Fatima University.

Angelita Madulid, head of

CITEM, said it was the first time for Filipino schools to participate in the expo and the first time the country's government had worked to promote its education industry in China.

"We hope promotions in China will enable us to find our shortcomings and update our education industry based on the latest market demand and

developments," Madulid told *Beijing Today*.

She reminded prospective students not to forget that the island nation offered breathtaking landscapes and a fascinating culture.

More information on studying in the Philippines is available at: www.citem.com.ph



By Zhao Hongyi
A delegation of
seven

universities from Thailand marked the country's first appearance at the education expo.

"Thailand has good MBA, accounting, media and applied technology courses," Liu Linhe, an assistant at the Thai

Thailand: Tropical Training

embassy in Beijing told *Beijing Today*.

Thailand started recruiting students in China five years ago, and today over 2,000 Chinese are enrolled at Thai schools, with more than half in Assumption University in

Bangkok.

"Thailand is an ideal place for students from low income families to experience different lifestyles, cultures and education," Liu said.

Study costs in Thailand, including tuition fees and

living expenditures, average around only 7,000 to 8,000 yuan a year, and the country features a rich, diverse culture, welcoming people, beautiful land and fantastic food.

Liu said Thailand was determined to attract more

Chinese students and that it offered better quality professional training than that available in China as well as top courses in English and Thai.



By Xie Lixue
Singapore, one
of the

fast-developing countries in Asia, boasts bilingual schooling, a safe society, an advanced education system and relatively low tuition fees.

Six schools from the small island country took part in last weekend's event, pitching the strengths of an education system where East and West

Singapore: Close to Home

converge.

The primary advantage of Singapore's education system is that from kindergarten to university, students are taught in two languages, one English and the other likely their native language, such as Chinese, Malay or Tamil.

With many similarities between Singapore and major

Chinese cities, domestic students can expect to undergo little culture shock after first moving to the country, as many people speak and study Mandarin. At the same time, English-based learning and living can give students the environment for rapid skills improvement and a bridge to destinations further abroad.

That bridge is being widened these days as more Singaporean universities establish ties with European and American counterparts.

"Many universities are opening branch schools or starting joint programs here, such as the Georgia Institute of Technology, the University of Chicago and the European

business school INSEAD," said Liu Jing, manager of student services at Singapore Education, a promotion agent.

"Many Chinese students enroll in those courses because they offer comparatively low tuition fees and a wide variety of subjects."

Photos by Ayi, Zhang Nan, Xie Lixue



Heng Yun

The Heng Yun store in Xijiekou is the city's largest dealer of MIDI equipment, including synthesizers, tone generators and other mixing equipment. Everything on sale is authentic, imported gear, designed and built by big international brands.

The ground floor houses two studios for MIDI equipment from such makers as Yamaha, Roland, Akai, Muto, Echo and Remo.

When professional quality and capacity is more important than the bottom line, a good choice is the Yamaha Motif ES 8 synthesizer, one of the big guns in the Japanese company's catalog. It has a huge capacity, offers 128 complex tones, eight voice parts in its plug-effect processor and is the world's only 512 MB music studio. That power comes at a price though - 19,800 yuan to be exact.

The EMU PK-X6 synthesizer is a more reasonable choice for modest local musicians, storing hundreds of tones and offering decent capacity for an easier-to-swallow 5,000 yuan.

The Dig-tech GNX-4 (5,800 yuan) has everything a budding producer needs to put together a raging heavy metal track. Its processor can link to a computer or MIDI machine, and it has a USB port, allowing it to connect to SM cards for recording. Plus it comes with 60 drum presets and 60 customized drum options as well as legal versions of recording software.

Heng Yun's second floor is a drum dealership, stocking sets, single drums and paraphernalia from brands like Pearl, Tama and Mapax.

Where: 105 Xijiekou Nandajie, Xicheng
Open: 9 am - 8:30 pm **Tel:** 6618 8745



Worm mixer at Xuanzhuan Qitian, 1,053 yuan

Solo Guitar World

This modest guitar shop stocks all kinds of axes, from classic makers like Gibson, Fender, Marshall and Ibanez, to lesser known but worthy brands like South Korea's Art. Acoustic, electric or both, there is sure to be a guitar here for any strummer.

The red electric Art RG 300 (2,000 yuan) guitar is a beautiful combination of form and function, with a hardwood body and fingerboard and redwood neck. The paint is taken straight from Fender classics, while actual assembly is done on a Gibson line, meaning the finished product is of similar quality to higher priced American models. A carefully placed cord on the neck helps support the guitar and keep it from getting bent out of shape when weather changes.

Equally economical area Art brand basses, like the Musician model that has a pine body, maple neck and rosewood fingerboard. It has two pick-ups to emphasize lower and higher register sounds, and is a solid choice for thrumming out some driving funk, punk or metal bass lines.

In this age of technology, there still is no replacing the tuneful tones of the acoustic guitar. Store owner Zhang Shijun said he uses a classic Washburn guitar, assembled in China and priced at just 900 yuan. The pine and rosewood instrument produces rich, warm notes.

Where: 134 Xijiekou Nandajie, Xicheng **Open:** 9 am - 8:30 pm **Tel:** 6618 2549



Gibson's electric guitar at Xuanjin Yalu, 17,000 yuan
Photos by Li Shuzhuan

By Wang Yao

Professional musicians and music fans ready to move from air to real guitars have lots of choices these days. The number of music stores around the city is swelling, particularly in the Xijiekou and Liulichang areas.

Don't fret - of these many choices, several places stock quality instruments, take and sell second hand equipment and even can arrange lessons, practice space and more.

Xuanyin Yalu

Nestled in the university district in Haidian, this store is a mecca for student music lovers, offering a variety of quality guitars and other instruments at prices within reason for student budgets.

Owner Yo Yo reminds young would-be guitar gods that sound is more important than looks when picking an axe, and therefore recommends the Oxen FC 316. It is made of aged rosewood, guaranteeing sound quality, with a dark red fingerboard and green shell highlights. Though only 400 yuan, the guitar produces excellent middle register sounds, but it tends to be a little light on the lowest bass notes.

Most of the electric selection consists of guitars from American makers Fender and Squier, which offer world-class quality for locally acceptable prices since they are assembled in China. One Fender mod-

el (1,000 yuan) features a triangular, black body, a thin neck to make it easier to find the frets and produce cool slides, and a pick-up set to produce light, clean sounds best suited for pop, jazz and funk tunes.

Outside of guitars, the store sells synthesizers from such brands as Zoon, Krog, Boss and Dig-Tech. The latter's RP50 machine is perfect for budding musicians on a budget, offering space for 80 effects tones (40 pre-set) and 36 adjustable drum settings in a portably-sized package. The price is just 600 yuan.

Yo Yo is normally around to offer expert instrument advice, such as guiding young drummers to start out with light sticks before working their way up.

Where: 215 Dingfuzhuang Beidajie, Chaoyang
Open: 9 am - 10 pm
Tel: 6547 7876



Practice room in Xuanzhuan Qitian

Xuanzhuan Qitian

It may not look like much from the outside, but the Xuanzhuan Qitian store has got it where it counts. The seemingly small space opens to a spacious practice room available for rent. The store sells and rents instruments, including synthesizers and effects processors, and handles exchanges of second-hand instruments.

Xuanzhuan Qitian is a legal sales agent of quality TC Electronic and E.H effect processors, but really stands out with its less usual services.

It is a one-stop rehearsal spot for bands, offering excellent drums, keyboards, guitars, microphones and other equipment for rent by the hour. As many as four bands can jam in the practice are at any given time, and the room has been training grounds for such top local acts as Tang Dynasty, 8 Hands and No Fish.

Longer-term rentals of instruments are available for musicians who need something for a performance, or just to play around with at home. Guitars run 300 to 400 yuan a day and figure on about three times that for a Yamaha drum set. Advance reservations are recommended.

When the time has come for an upgrade, don't throw an old guitar away or sell it to a friend for a song. Store owner Xing Yuanyuan gives fair assessments of used instruments' value and takes them as trade in against the prices of new items. Used instruments in good condition can go for as much as 60 percent of their original value.

Xuanzhuan Qitian's experts even offer instrument maintenance and repair services, as well as can provide or arrange lessons from top local musicians.

Where: 28 Gulou Dongdajie, Dongcheng **Open:** 9 am - 6 pm **Tel:** 8404 3614



Killer keyboards at Heng Yun

Axes, Synths and Skins



PRS electric guitar, 26,000 yuan

Music Store Yellow Pages

On Xijiekou Dajie

Tian Yin

Where: 116 Xijiekou Nandajie **Tel:** 6612 0831

Fierce

Where: 64 Xijiekou Nandajie **Tel:** 6618 1825

Fuyuehang

Where: 97 Xijiekou Nandajie **Tel:** 6616 3316

Shiyan

Where: 106 Xijiekou Nandajie **Tel:** 6651 1844

Guyan

Where: 86 Xin Jie Kou, Nandajie **Tel:** 6613 7206

Nannuxiu

Where: 132 Xijiekou Nandajie **Tel:** 6618 2516

Qiaoyou Yuelin

Where: 76 Xijiekou Nandajie **Tel:** 6615 9425

On Liulichang Street

Beijing Kailifeng

Where: 70 Nanxinhuajie, Xuanxu **Tel:** 6318 1359

Duomisuo

Where: 66 Nanxinhuajie **Tel:** 6315 9187

Jinghua

Where: 57 Nanxinhuajie **Tel:** 8910 3128

Music Castle

Where: 15 Nanxinhuajie **Tel:** 13381353669

Heng Yuan

Where: 66 Nanxinhuajie **Tel:** 13167597811

Jinjunlv musical instruments

Where: 74 Nanxinhuajie **Tel:** 8092 5671

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Exhibitions



Taoism and Arts

Taoism represents a way of life. In the long tradition of Chinese culture, the "Tao" has played a characteristic role in effecting how people create in the form of art. Artists have been influenced by such ideas, and have also tried to break away from them, resulting in art works with strong character making strong statements.

Where: Creation Art Gallery, north end of Ritan Lu, Chaoyang **When:** daily 10 am – 7 pm till November 12 **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8561 7570

Dry Fruit Series by Liu Mingyi

Liu Mingyi, a graduate from the China Academy of Fine Arts in 1991 and member of the China Artists' Association, works as a teacher in the Oil Painting Department of the Academy of Arts and Design, Hebei University.

Where: Fafa Gallery, 1 Xiangjiang Beilu, Chaoyang **When:** November 1-10, daily 10:30 am – 8 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8457 3506

Two Ways: Works by Rao Songqing and Lang Xiaoyi

Rao Songqing and Lang Xiaoyi are an artist couple living in Songzhuang. They share almost everything in their lives, but their styles are so different. Rao mainly focuses on scenery, using disordered lines to form structures that look unstable but are actually regular. Lang uses a

Halloween Party at Banana
Howls, whoops and ghostly cries! More is temptation, inspiration and infinite pleasure... Don't hesitate, take part in the party and enjoy All Saints' Day!
Where: Banana Bar, Scitech Hotel, 22 Janguomenwai Dajie
When: Saturday, 9 pm – 4 am **Admission:** 60 yuan **Tel:** 6528 3636

Carnival Eve Before All Saints' Day
When night falls, the carnival programs such as fancy dress party, disco, appalling ghosts street tour begin. And Harry Potter's magic stone, magic wand and lots of elves with pumpkin lights will appear. Unexpected presents and surprising awards are waiting for you! Attention: People with heart disease and high blood pressure are prohibited!
Where: Wangfujing Grand Hotel **When:** Sunday, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 888 yuan **Tel:** 800 810 1887

Halloween Bash at Club 9
The party starts first at Tango before moving to Cloud 9 at 3 am. At Tango, Australia's No. 1 DJ Phil K and support DJ Chozie will spin the decks. DJs Meat Katie and Lee Coombs will take charge of mood setting for the after-party at Cloud 9. Prizes for the best costume include an all-expenses-paid weekend at Nanshan Ski resort valued at 10,000 yuan and a one-year membership at Evolution Fitness Club.
Where: Cloud 9, 7 Sanlitun Beijie, Chaoyang; Tango, 79 Hepingli Xijie, Chaoyang
When: Friday 10 pm – 7 am **Admission:** 100 yuan includes both parties at Tango and Cloud 9 **Tel:** 6417 8317 (Club 9); 6428 2288 (Tango)

Costume Party at The Loft
This is a costume party featuring a line-up of China's top DJs including Michey Zhang, Dio, Yang Bing and Usami who will ensure a festive atmosphere with a mix of trance, techno and funky break beats. Don't hesitate, join in and enjoy All Saints' Day!
Where: The Loft, 4 Gongti Beilu, Chaoyang **When:** Saturday, 9 pm – 4 am **Admission:** 60 yuan in advance, 100 yuan at the door **Tel:** 6739 9839

Club Look
Super DJ group including Vestax World DJ China Finals Champion Leon, Phillipines DMC champion Paul, and China DMC champion Shorty-S, will bring you a wild Halloween costume party. Prizes for a lucky draw and best costume include a one-night stay at the State Guest House, two bottles of Johnny Walker Black Label, and a gym membership card worth of 3,900 yuan.
Where: Club Look, 4 Gongti Beilu, Chaoyang **When:** Saturday, 9 pm – 4 am **Admission:** 100 yuan **Tel:** 6506 6770

Happy Halloween!

baby's or a dog's face to express her mood and feelings.

Where: 1 Renzhuang Beilu, Songzhuang, Tongzhou **When:** November 1-11, daily 9 am – 12 pm **Admission:** 15 yuan **Tel:** 6959 8343 (appointment only)



Ren Jingqin Solo Watercolor Exhibition

Ren Jinqin's work focuses on real life objects, such as birds and landscape. He is fond of showing the slight changes in natural light and scene in his art.

Where: Melodic Art Gallery, 14 Janguomenwai Dajie, Dongcheng **When:** November 1-11, daily 9 am – 5 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6515 8123

Activities

French Food Festival

During the Year of French Culture in Beijing, Sopexa will organize the Third French Food and Beverage Festival at Wangfujing this weekend. Activities include opening ceremony, animations, tasting and sale of delicious French foods. Call 6588 8675 for details.

High Club: Yungang Grottoes

We board a night train to go to Shanxi on November 12 (Friday), arriving Saturday morning. We will visit the Yungang Grottoes and other famous sites, and drive to Datong for dinner and a look around. Back on the train Saturday night to arrive in Beijing Sunday morning.

Sign up before November 4. **Cost:** 820 yuan **Tel:** 6553 3920

Movies



Don Camillo Monsignore...ma non troppo

Directed by Carmine Gallone, starring Leda Gloria, Gina Rovere and Gino Cervi. Don Camillo, now a bishop, and Peppone, now a senator, is in Rome. Their rivalry is as fierce as when they were just a village priest and a village mayor, but this time they are reunited in their little countryside village by a controversy over the construction of a communal house on the place of an

old, derelict church. They have to make peace between their faithful hosts, Christians and communists. English with Italian subtitles.

Where: Italian Embassy, 2 Dong'erjie, Sanlitun **When:** November 4, 7 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6532 2187



Ong-Bak

Directed by Prachya Pinkaew, starring Prachya Pinkaew and Panna Rittikrai. A sacred Buddha statuette called Ong Bak is stolen from a rural village and it becomes the task of a young man, Boonting (Phanom Yeeram), to track the thief down to Bangkok and reclaim the religious treasure.

Along the way, Boonting must use his astounding athleticism and traditional Muay Thai skills to combat his adversaries.

Where: UME International Cineplex, (Huaxing Guoji Yingcheng), 44 Shuangyushu Kexueyuan, Haidian **When:** several sessions daily **Tel:** 6261 2851

Spring in a Small Town (Xiaocheng Zhichun)

Directed by Tian Zhuang-zhuang, starring Hu Jinfan, Xin Baqing and Wu Jun. Tian Zhuang-zhuang's masterful remake of the 1948 classic by Fei Mu about a doctor who returns to his hometown after the Sino-Japanese War only to find his old flame has married his best friend.

Where: Cherry Lane Movie Theater, 29 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang **When:** 8 pm, tonight and Saturday **Admission:** 50 yuan **Tel:** 13501251303

Service



Austrian Culinary Week

Swissotel Beijing has the honor to invite you for a culinary week featuring Vienna's exquisite cuisine along with two master chefs from Vienna and four lovely musicians, who will be performing during this unique event with us. Enjoy with us this opportunity at Swissotel Beijing, where Vienna waits for you!

Where: 2 Chaoyangmen Beidajie **When:** November 1-8 **Price:** 148 yuan plus 15 percent surcharge per person for lunch, 168 yuan plus 15 percent surcharge per person for dinner **Tel:** 6553 2288 ext. 2223

Performances



Monte-Carlo Romeo and Juliet Ballet

Monte-Carlo Ballet Company made their debut in Beijing in 2000 with *Romeo and Juliet*, which is considered representative of the company's unique artistic style. This time they return with four performances of *Romeo and Juliet*.

Where: Tianqiao Theatre, 30 Beiwei Lu, Xuanwu **When:** tonight – Sunday, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 180-1,280 yuan **Tel:** 8315 6300

Butterflies are Free

Based on Leonard Gershe's famous play, directed by Li Mingsen and featuring a cast and crew from Hong Kong and Shanghai. Performed by the Shanghai Dramatic Arts Centre.

Where: Poly Theatre, 14 Dongzhimen Nandajie, Dongcheng **When:** Saturday, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 80-680 yuan **Tel:** 6500 1188 ext. 5126

Experimental Concert

The Beijing Symphony Orchestra performs Tan Dun's *The Map Concerto* for Cello, Video and Orchestra. Pipa by Lan Weiwei, cello by Anssi Karttunen and conducted by Tan Dun.

Where: Poly Theatre, 14 Dongzhimen Nandajie, Dongcheng **When:** Sunday, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 60-480 yuan **Tel:** 6406 8888 or 6500 1188 ext. 5126

TV and Radio Highlights

HBO

29 Friday

Minority Report 9 pm

30 Saturday

Punch-Drunk Love 9 pm

31 Sunday

Jumanji 8 pm

1 Monday

She's in Love 6 pm

2 Tuesday

Knock around Guys 11:30 pm

3 Wednesday

The Time Machine 9 pm

4 Thursday

Old School 9 pm

CCTV-9

Monday – Friday

Around China 6:30 am

Cultural Express 8:30 am

Nature and Science /

Chinese Civilization 11:30 am

Cultural Express 2:30 pm

Nature and Science /

Chinese Civilization 5:30 pm

Dialogue 7:30 pm

News Updates /

Asia Today 8 pm

Sports Scene 11:15 pm

Saturday

Travelogue 9:30 am

Center Stage 11:30 am

Sunday

Sports Weekend 10 am

Documentary 10:30 am

This Week 12:30 am

China Radio International 91.5 FM

Monday – Friday

Easy FM Afternoon 2-7 pm

Fun in Beijing 5-5:30 pm

Joy FM 9:05-11 pm

Saturday

Music Memories 8:05-11 am

Euro Hit 40 12:05-1 pm

Musique Sans Frontières 6:05-8 pm

Joy FM 9:05-11 pm

Sunday

Music Memories 8:05-11 am

Jazz Beat 6:05-8 pm

Joy FM 9:05-11 pm

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By Zhang Jianzhong

By Shida Zhu

As suggested starting point for such a visit is Longchang, southeast of Neijiang city. It lies on the Chengdu-Chongqing Railway and the Chengdu-Chongqing Expressway with an easy access to traffic. It stands at the crossroads that leads to Shaanxi in the north, Yunnan in the south and Hubei in the east. Historically a place of considerable strategic importance, anyone seeking to conquer southwest China had first to control Longchang.

Longchang was under the jurisdiction of the State of Ba during the Western Zhou Dynasty and the Spring and Autumn and Warring States period. In 316 BC, after Emperor of Hui of the Qin Dynasty sent General Zhang Yi to unify Sichuan, it belonged to the Prefecture of Ba. In 1567, as the place was wild and became the refuge of robbers and social outcast, the court decided to amalgamate parts of Luzhou, Fushun and Rongchang into a county which was headquartered in Jin'e (Golden Goose) town.

One of the most outstanding sights of the locality are the numerous groups of gate towers, today a rare scene in China. Now only 20 or so remain, mostly built during the Qing Dynasty. Feature four stone columns and three gates as a copy of the ancient wooden structures, they were built to commend the virtues of chastity, filial piety, longevity and social service.

Standing before such gigantic stone structures, one might wonder why the feudal rulers attached so much importance to chastity and filial piety that they spent so much silver in erecting these structures? Maybe, the merit of such people helped maintain the stability of the feudal society.

Of these gate towers, 13 were built in the 49 years from the 18th year of the reign of Emperor Daoguang to the thirteenth year of the reign of Emperor Guangxu (1838-1887), spanning the reign of four Qing emperors.

Wandering in the streets, you will come across time and weather-worn gate towers rising over black tiled flat houses with naked bricks. A hardy man carrying two barrels of drinking water on his shoulder may pass through the street gate tower and head home, adding even more back country flavor to the scene. More often than not, the job is taken by a Sichuan woman. This is definitely the merit of the locals, tough, simple, hospitable, who never will be fooled by destiny.

As a witness to spiritual merit, the local people built a "city on the hill" in Yundingzhai, 20 kilometers from Longchang. It is the Yundingzhai Castle with an area of 16 hectares on top of the Yunding Mountain 530 meters above sea level. It is the only ancient castle that remains intact in the county.

It was first built during the Ming Dynasty. In 1371, the fourth year of the reign of Emperor Hongwu, a farmer called Guo Mengsi entered Sichuan from Macheng, Hubei. When he came to Yunding Mountain, his luggage came loose from his bamboo pole and rolled down the mountain slope, and he decided to settle and farm there. His descendants Guo Lian and Guo Yuanzhu passed the imperial examination for civil servants and took up high-ranking official posts in the Ming court. The clan of Guo prospered on top of the mountain thanks to imperial grace.

During the reign of Emperor Wanli in the late Ming period, as there were constant attacks from robbers, the village was turned into a fortified castle, complete with cannons. The castle was later expanded and solidified in 1859 by Guo Renyong during the 9th year of the reign of Emperor Xianfeng. The wall measures 7.5 meters high and 3 to 4 meters wide and stretches over 1,640 meters. The wall of defense has six gates. There used to be 54 courtyards in the castle. Now, only one third remain.

When you first approach the castle, you will be impressed by the picture postcard like view of withered weeds that wave in the mountain breeze on the dilapidated wall under a setting sun, giving one a sense of history lost and remorse. A stone tablet stands in front of the Tongyongmen Gate, recording the history and evolution of the castle. Five gates, the Xiaozhai gate, the Moon gate, the Tongyongmen gate, the North gate and the Xiaobeimen gate provide access to the castle.

Several dozen Ming and Qing mansions still stand along the stone slab paved lanes. Many have collapsed as they had not been inhabited for a long time. In the *shuyuan* (ancient Chinese private schools) Confucian classics were read, imbuing the young with dreams of a successful official career. Could you imagine how many stories of love and hate are buried in the debris of black bricks in the quiet courtyards of those stylish mansions with painted columns and sculptured window frames?

One mile away from the castle is Yunding Market, once the site of banks, restaurants, a pharmacy, tea house, rice store and drapery, and a collection of shops for pleasure and daily needs. Strangely enough, they opened at midnight and closed at dawn. The odd hours were a result of the social habits of the wealthy inhabitants of the castle, who spent whole nights playing mahjong and other games. The prosperity of the market was closely related with that of the Guos. All but a handful of the shops in the market were owned by them. However,



Grey slate rooftops of Fubao

Photos by Imaginechina

Southern Sichuan Serenade

For anyone looking for something a little different from the usual famous beauty spots and places of historical interest, a visit to some of the less well known towns in mountainous southern Sichuan is worth considering. These days, the region is a little more accessible than it was for Tang Dynasty poet Li Bai, who wrote, 'It is more difficult to go to the State of Shu (ancient Sichuan) than to go to the blue sky.'



Yundingzhai



Buddhist temple at Xianshi



Gate towers at Longchang

most of them have disappeared into history.

Before the newly harvested rice goes to the market every year, the local farmers would cook rice with the new and the old mixed together and prepare a variety of fresh vegetable dishes for the worship of heaven, earth and their ancestors. According to Chinese tradition, heaven and earth are regarded as gods with omnipotent power and ancestral worship is a long-standing local tradition.

Getting there: Take a bus at the Wugui Bridge in Chengdu, bound for Longchang county for 40 to 50 yuan. From the county seat to Yunding Castle, minibuses regularly make the 17 kilometer trip. The fare is 8 to 10 yuan.

In southern Sichuan, you might also visit Fubao town on the Dacao River in Hejiang county. This densely forested mountainous region lies on the border of Guizhou province. The town thrived during the Yuan Dynasty but was later burned

down. It was rebuilt in the late Qing and early Republic period. The old street of the town perching on mountain slopes with a great variety of housing structures in unique southern Sichuan style remains intact. Specialists of ancient architecture speak highly of the residential houses in the town, and many films and TV dramas have been shot here. The cliff paintings at Gaocun, created with perfect craftsmanship, are of enormous value for those interested in stone carving.

Getting there: Take long-distance bus from Luzhou to Hejiang county for about 10 yuan, and then another bus from Hejiang to Fubao for 8 yuan. From Chongqing, there is a daily bus to Fubao for 30 yuan.

Another ancient town in southern Sichuan not to be missed is Yaoba, eight kilometers southwest of the seat of Hejiang county, or 39 kilometers from Luzhou.

Most outstanding of all is the Dongyue Tem-

ple, a sacred place of Buddhism that features special Ming and Qing style architecture. In addition to a group of ancient residential houses, the town boasts the beautiful Xianding Mountain and Xianren (Fairy) Cave, where, according to legend, Liu Zhenren, one of the fathers of Chinese Taoism, visited.

Modern movie masters Ling Zifeng and Huang Jianzhong shot films in the town. The Dahong Rice Store, with its carved rails, roofed corridors, red lanterns and spacious courtyard, still stands in the town as a tourist attraction.

Getting there: Take the direct bus from Luzhou to Yaoba, or take a bus bound for Hejiang and get off at Xindian and then take a taxi for the remaining six kilometers.

Most picturesque of all towns in southern Sichuan is Xianshi (City of Fairies) in Fushun county, Zigong, the oldest producer of well salt in China. The town has a history of 1,400 years and is a salt trade hub on the Fuxi River. The well salt produced in Zigong was transported by river through Xianshi to Chongqing and downstream of the Yangtze River.

You may go to one of the tea houses that put their tables on the stone-covered streets and experience the leisure of the local farmers who have toiled a whole day.

Most of the local people are Buddhists. It was no coincidence that the local salt traders turned to religion for the protection of the Buddha, as salt laden boats frequently capsized in the turbulent mountain rivers. The Golden Bridge Temple with an inscription by modern calligrapher and Buddhist master Zhao Puchu is bisected by a street that runs right through it, bringing some vitality of secular life to the temple. In Chinese, it is called *guojielou*, meaning a tower spanning over a street.

At Miaozikou is a towering stone structure, in the middle of which is inscribed four Chinese characters with perfect calligraphic artistry: Uniquely outstanding in southern Shu. The couplet that is carved on the stone columns reads,

*The fragrant wind from the five temples
Makes the embroiderers' homes balmy;
Hundreds of plying boats
Startle the birds that rest at the oasis.*

This perfectly describes the local scene: the thriving Buddhism, the silk and embroidery businesses, the trade of well salt and the brisk river transport.

Getting there: Take a bus from Zigong to Xianshi.